

MORNING
AND
EVENING
MEDITATIONS

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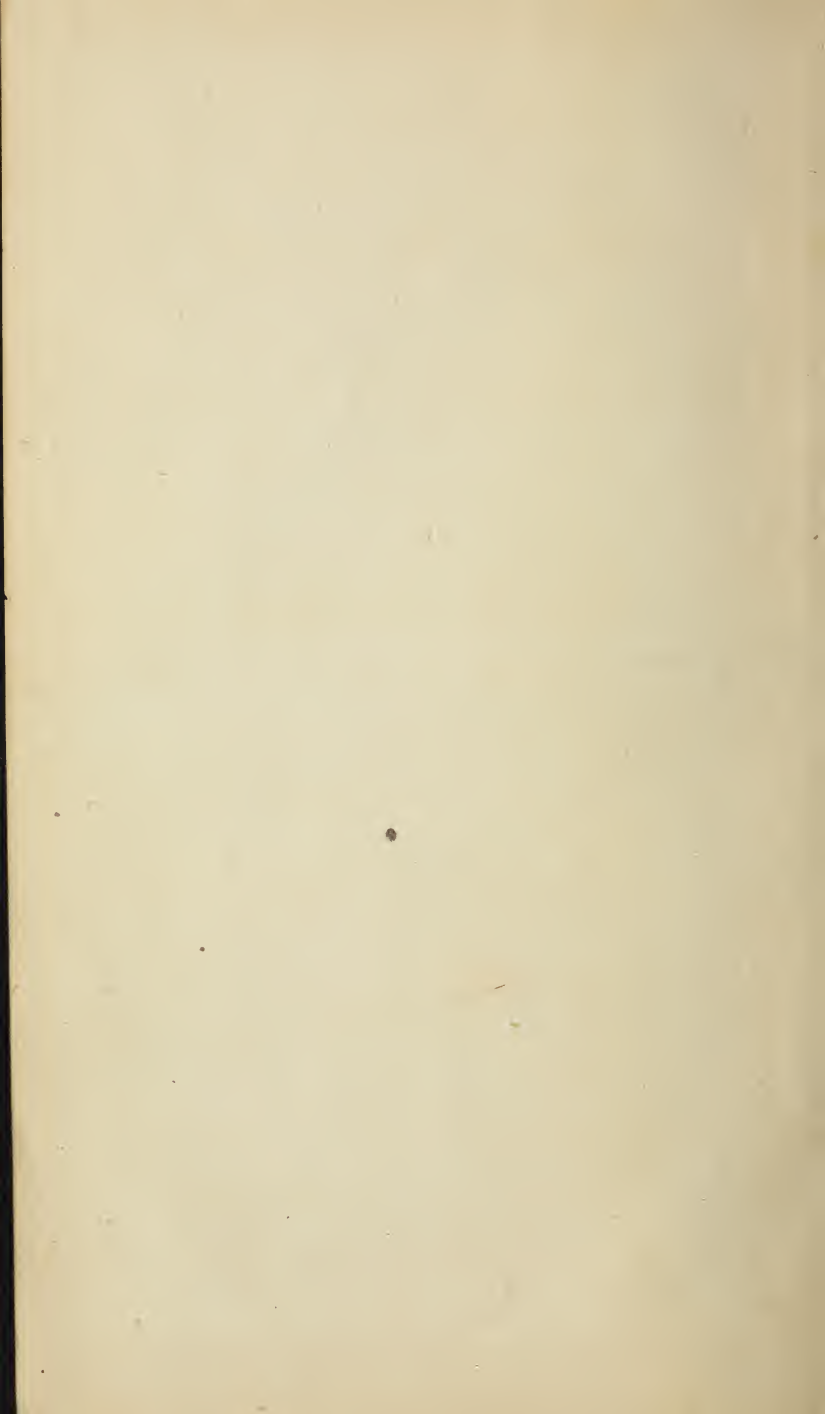
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MORNING AND EVENING

MEDITATIONS

FOR

Every Day in a Month.

by Mary Carpenter
carpenter
"

A NEW EDITION:

PREPARED FOR POPULAR USE,

WITH THE ADDITION OF PRAYERS.

READVILLE
LONDON.

W. HORSELL, ALDINE CHAMBERS, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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A
FIRST OFFERING
OF
LOVE AND GRATITUDE
TO THE
MEMORY OF A REVERED FATHER.

*In exchange
Janett Biblical Inst
Mar 11, 1927*



PRINTED BY
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PREFACE.

IT has been suggested by an eminent Christian that a text should be every morning selected, which may be carried in the thoughts through the day, serving for self-government and religious improvement, for excitement or restraint, in the various circumstances of life. By thus dwelling on a short passage of the sacred writings, a deeper and a fuller meaning will be discovered, which may have been lost without this close and serious consideration of it. "It might be a profitable exercise," says the late Rev. JOHN FOSTER, "sometimes to try our faith in particulars. Go to any part of God's revelation, one and another, and say, 'Here is something for my faith, *i.e.* for me to believe, and to be in right manner affected by. Has my faith ever been here? Has this really been taken within its compass? It is true I did not discredit or deny this, or this;—but has it been to me what the Divine Spirit wrote it here for? Has it been to me that instruction, impression, holy influence, for which it was designed?' "

To assist in that private meditation on the Scriptures which will make them to the heart of each individual profitable for edification, strength and comfort, and which is the best preparation for secret prayer, this little volume has been compiled, and the Divine blessing is implored upon it.

M. C.

PREFACE TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

THE favourable manner in which this work has been received, both in this country and in America (where it has been reprinted), has led to the desire that it should be presented in a form adapted for popular use. Whatever variations may be found between this and the second Edition, have been made in accordance with the wishes of the Compiler. For the Prayers, however, the present Editor is alone responsible. He desires to express his thanks to the Rev. F. Howorth, of Bury, and to the family of the late respected Dr. Arnold, for the assistance they have rendered him : but he has not given the Authors' names in this part of the work, from a conviction that when addressing the Throne of Grace it ought not to be a consideration whose words we are uttering, but simply whether they express the feelings of the heart.

Those who are not satisfied with the typography of this Volume, are requested to procure the Second Edition (LONDON: *Longman, Brown, & Co.* 1847) ; which, for beauty of execution, we are sure will please them. In the present instance, cheapness, and a consequent circulation among those of humbler means, have been the objects aimed at ; and no space has been wasted to produce effect. Those who are acquainted with the circumstances under which the Oberlin Press was established, (as explained in *The Helper* for Jan. 1850,) will not expect great things. “ The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.”

P. P. C.

N.B. This work may be obtained, at the rate of 7 copies for 10s.6d., or 14 copies for £1, from the Printer ; carriage free to London or Manchester.

INDEX OF MEDITATIONS.

TEXT	AUTHOR	PAGE
GEN. xvi. 13. <i>Thou, God, seest me</i>	Wellbeloved	52
.. xxii. 14. <i>In the mountain, Jehovah will provide</i> ..	Wellbeloved	12
.. xlii. 36. <i>All these things are against me</i>	Farr	125
JOB xiv. 1. <i>Man is of few days and full of trouble</i>	Farr	60
.. xxxv. 10. <i>God giveth songs in the night</i>	W. James	9
PSALM iv. 6. <i>Who will shew us any good</i>	Greenwood	127
.. xviii. 1. <i>I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength</i>	M. C.	86
.. xix. 2. <i>Day unto day uttereth speech</i>	Tuckerman	6
.. xxiii. 4. <i>The valley of the shadow of death</i> ..	J. B. Estlin	89
.. xlii. 11. <i>Why art thou cast down, O my soul</i> ..	L. Carpenter	21
.. lxii. 1. <i>Truly my soul waiteth upon God</i>	Brooks	25
.. lxxviii. 25. <i>Man did eat angel's food</i>	M. C.	92
.. cvii. 7. <i>And he led them forth by the right way</i>	M. C.	14
.. cxxxi. 2. <i>My soul is even as a weaned child</i>	Armstrong	120
Is. xxvi. 3. <i>Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose</i> <i>mind is stayed on Thee</i>	M. C.	24
JER. xxxi. 18. <i>Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned</i> ..	M. C.	64
LAM. iii. 40. <i>Let us search and try our ways</i>	Tuckerman	1
ZECH. vi. 12. <i>The Branch shall build the temple of the Lord</i>	Watson	105
MATT. v. 4. <i>Blessed are they that mourn</i>	M. C.	17
.. xix. 20. <i>What lack I yet</i>	L. Carpenter	77
MARK iv. 39. <i>Peace, be still</i>	R. L. C.	95
.. x. 50. <i>Bartimæus rose and came to Jesus</i>	R. L. C.	67
.. xi. 11. <i>Jesus looked round about upon all things</i>	M. C.	130
LUKE vii. 50. <i>Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace</i> ..	R. L. C.	33
.. x. 21. <i>I thank Thee, O Father</i>	M. C.	122
.. xxii. 42. <i>Not my will, but Thine be done</i>	M. C.	138
.. xxiv. 32. <i>Did not our hearts burn within us</i>	R. L. C.	114
.. .. 36. <i>Jesus himself stood in the midst of them</i>	M. C.	4
JOHN iv. 14. <i>He that drinketh of this water shall never thirst</i>	J. Taylor	50
.. .. 34. <i>My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me</i>	Scougal	30
.. v. 22. <i>The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son</i>	Ware	117
.. xi. 12. <i>Lord, if he sleep he shall do well</i>	P. P. C.	141

JOHN xi. 28. <i>The Master is come, and calleth for thee</i>	M. C.	98
.. .. 36. <i>Behold, how he loved him</i>	Mrs. Bache	57
.. xii. 7. <i>Against the day of my burying hath she kept this</i>	M. C.	102
.. xiii. 31. <i>Now is the Son of Man glorified</i>	M. C.	135
.. xiv. 6. <i>I am the way, the truth, and the life</i>	Brooks	107
.. xv. 5. <i>Without me, ye can do nothing</i>	Greenwood	80
.. xvi. 7. <i>It is expedient for you that I go away</i>	R. L. C.	19
.. xxi. 17. <i>Lovest thou me</i>	R. L. C.	28
ACTS i. 9. <i>A cloud receivd him out of their sight</i>	R. L. C.	147
ROM. xii. 12. <i>Continuing instant in prayer</i>	Tuckerman	83
.. xiii. 10. <i>Love is the fulfilling of the law</i>	M. C.	69
I COR. ii. 12. <i>The Spirit which is from God</i>	P. P. C.	133
II COR. v. 7. <i>We walk by faith, not by sight</i>	Greenwood	62
EPH. ii. 19. <i>Fellow citizens with the saints</i>	Martineau	111
PHIL. iii. 13, 14. <i>I count not myself to have apprehended</i>	Ware	145
.. iv. 7. <i>The peace of God which passeth all understanding</i>	Channing	45
I THESS. v. 17. <i>Pray without ceasing</i>	Tuckerman	42
HEBR. xi. 34. <i>Out of weakness were made strong</i>	M. C.	100
.. xii. 2. <i>Looking unto Jesus</i>	Zollikofer	72
.. .. 9. <i>The Father of Spirits</i>	M. C.	55
I JOHN v. 5. <i>Who is he that overcometh the world</i>	Ware	47
REV. xiv. 3. <i>And they sang a new song before the throne</i>	Watson	75
.. xxi. 4. <i>God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes</i>	Watson	36
.. xxii. 1. <i>A pure river of water of life</i>	M. C.	40
INVITATION to the Lord's Supper.....	Jer. Taylor	150
MEDITATION at the Lord's Supper.....	M. C.	152
.. after the Lord's Supper.....	R. L. C.	154
.. for Christmas Day.....	Livermore	156
.. for Good Friday (See also pp. 135, 138.)	M. C.	159
.. for Easter Sunday (See also pp. 4, 114.)	M. C.	162
.. for Ascension day (See also p. 147.)	M. C.	165
.. on the Saviour's Promise.....	M. C.	168
.. in case of Severe Illness.....	Farr	172
.. after Recovery from Sickness.....	Farr	175
.. in case of Death.....	P. P. C.	177
.. for the Last Day in the Year (See also p. 145.)	Ware	180

INDEX OF POETRY.

Abraham heard; believing God	<i>B. Barton</i>	13
According to thy gracious word	<i>Montgomery</i>	153
A charge to keep I have.. ..	<i>Wesley</i>	146
And is he with thee? question well thy heart ..	<i>L. Sanford</i>	170
Behold the gospel mercy seat	<i>L. Carpenter</i>	34
Blest be Thy presence Lord! while lowly bending..	<i>M. C.</i>	183
Bound upon the accursed tree	<i>Milman</i>	160
Christ, the Lord, is risen today.. ..	<i>Wesley</i>	163
Come let us join our friends above.. ..	<i>Wesley</i>	20
Come ye who mourn, and dry your tears.. ..	<i>Wallace</i>	18
Descend, my Spirit, rest in humble peace ..	<i>M. C.</i>	41
Descend to Thy Jerusalem, O Lord	<i>Jer. Taylor</i>	105
Father, how shall we adore Thee	<i>M. C.</i>	109
Father, this gentle chastisement	<i>Ware</i>	176
Fear was within the tossing bark	<i>Hemans</i>	93
Fountain of life and living breath	<i>Quarles</i>	51
From the recesses of a lowly spirit	<i>Bowring</i>	66
From the table now retiring	<i>J. Rowe</i>	155
Give to the winds thy fears.. ..	<i>Gerhardt</i>	63
God, my strength, to thee I pray	<i>Merrick</i>	27
Go to dark Gethsemane	<i>Montgomery</i>	131
Go when the morning shineth	<i>Anon.</i>	7
Hallelujah! best and sweetest	<i>Breviary</i>	113
Hath not thy heart within thee burned	<i>Bulfinch</i>	115
Hear, O ye dead, awake, arise	<i>H. Moore</i>	118
He knelt, the Saviour knelt and prayed.. ..	<i>Hemans</i>	74
How sweet the words, and how benignly spoken	<i>Bowring</i>	82
I asked the Lord that I might grow	<i>Newton</i>	15
If love, the noblest, purest, best	<i>E. Taylor</i>	137
I'm but a stranger here; heaven is my home ..	<i>Anon.</i>	129
Interval of grateful shade.. ..	<i>Doddridge</i>	143
I say not 'Shield me, Father, from distress' ..	<i>Bowring</i>	126
Is there a lone and dreary hour	<i>New York Col.</i>	56
I would not live always; I ask not to stay ..	<i>Wesley</i>	61
Lord of the sabbath! hear our vows	<i>Doddridge</i>	3
Lord! we sit and cry to Thee	<i>Milman</i>	68

My God, my Father, while I stray	<i>Anon.</i>	139
My God, Thy boundless love I praise.. ..	<i>H. Moore</i>	123
My Spirit sighs to leave this vale of night ..	<i>M. C.</i>	184
Night is the time for rest.. ..	<i>Montgomery</i>	10
O Christian, to thy vows be true.. ..	<i>J. B. Estlin</i>	91
O God, my strength, my hope	<i>Wesley</i>	31
O hand of bounty, largely spread	<i>Heber</i>	93
Oh for the winged Seraph's power to soar ..	<i>Tuckerman</i>	38
Oh here if ever, God of love	<i>E. Taylor</i>	151
Oh why cast down, my soul	<i>Tuckerman</i>	22
O Lord, Thy heavenly grace impart	<i>Oberlin</i>	101
O lovely voices of the sky	<i>Hemans</i>	157
On the first Christian sabbath eve	<i>Montgomery</i>	5
O Thou to whose all searching sight	<i>Moravian</i>	79
Prayer is the soul's sincere desire	<i>Montgomery</i>	43
Quiet, Lord, my froward heart	<i>Newton</i>	121
See how he loved, exclaimed the Jew.. ..	<i>Mrs. Bache</i>	58
See our risen Lord ascending	<i>M. C.</i>	167
See the grateful sister bending.. ..	<i>Bulfinch</i>	104
Sing, Christian, sing, for you alone.. ..	<i>Mrs. Fisher</i>	76
Sinner, the Master is come	<i>M. C.</i>	99
Softly I slumbered on my peaceful couch ..	<i>M. C.</i>	184
Sorrow and darkness fled away.. ..	<i>M. C.</i>	134
Speak with us, Lord, Thyself reveal	<i>Wesley</i>	53
The curtains of the morn were slow upraised ..	<i>M. C.</i>	183
Thee will I love, my strength, my tower ..	<i>Wesley</i>	70
The hour must come, the closest ties.. ..	<i>L. Carpenter</i>	148
The morning dawned, but no bright glorious sun	<i>M. C.</i>	184
There is a calm the poor in spirit know.. ..	<i>Anon.</i>	24
The year hath past away	<i>Hutton</i>	181
Thou art gone to the grave, but we will not deplore Thee	<i>Heber</i>	179
Though sorrows rise, and dangers roll	<i>Heber</i>	29
Thou hidden love of God, whose height.. ..	<i>Wesley</i>	88
Thou who didst stoop below	<i>Anon.</i>	48
To prayer, to prayer, for the morning breaks ..	<i>Ware</i>	84
When sorrow sinks my spirit down.. ..	<i>Richardson</i>	173
With pains and anxious cares and griefs oppress..	<i>Tuckerman</i>	46

MORNING AND EVENING MEDITATIONS, &c.

First Week.

SUNDAY MORNING.

LAMENTATIONS III. 40.—*Let us search and try our ways.*

I HAVE finished the stage of another week in the journey of my life! Where have I been within that week? With whom have I communicated by conversation or by letter? What have I done? By what principles have I been guided in all my intercourse, in every transaction? What has been the character, and what the tendency of my thoughts? Have I been kind in every disposition; just in every feeling I have indulged, and in every judgment I have formed; pure in every desire; upright in every purpose; true in every word, and faithful to my sense of my duty in every action? O my Father, Thou knowest my heart, help me also to know it! I would judge myself by that rule of duty to Thee, to my own soul, and to my fellow-beings, which Christ has given, and by which I am at last to be judged before Thee. When and where have I been faithful? What have I neglected which I should have done? When, where, and how have I transgressed Thy commandments?

I have entered upon a new week. What may this week be to me? What is before me even in the passing day? How deep the darkness which hangs over even the passing hour! And from whence and why is this darkness? O Thou who art light, and dwellest in everlasting light, with Thee there

is no uncertainty respecting either time or eternity. Where, then, Father, shall I look for direction, or for security, but to Thee? I will walk, Father, I will live by the faith that Thou art, and that Thou art the rewarder of them that diligently seek Thee. I will make it my care every day, and in all things, to enjoy and to endure as seeing Thee who art invisible. Oh help me in all my ways to acknowledge Thee, and in all to endeavour faithfully to obey Thee, that Thou mayest direct my steps! Eternal adoration and thanksgivings be given Thee for him, Thy holy Son Jesus, who died to redeem *me* and *all* from all iniquity, and to purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. Oh that from this hour, no sin might ever triumph in my heart, or have any dominion over me! Father, I would live by the faith, that it is better, infinitely better, to enter into Thine eternal kingdom, and to be an heir of the Christian's blessedness, at the cost of any present self-restraint, self-denial, or self-sacrifice, in the cause of duty and Thy will, than to attain any attainable or conceivable good of earth and time, at the expense of the violation of even a single Christian principle. Whatever my hand or my heart shall find to do under the promptings of conscience, and the guidance of Thy will, I would do it with all my might. I would be zealous for spiritual growth; for spiritual mindedness; for the attainment of the spirit of Christ,—the mind that was in Christ. Like him, I would make it my meat and drink to do *all Thy* will, and to finish all the work Thou hast given me to do. In sympathy with Jesus, I would look upon every human being as my brother,—the child of our Heavenly Father; and whatever I would, in any relation, condition, or transaction, that any one should do to me, that will I endeavour faithfully to do to him. With these purposes and prayers in my heart, I welcome and bless Thee for this day, sacred to my soul by its associations with him who died, and rose again, and brought life and immortality to perfect light. May all the exercises of this day strengthen me in the principles of my immortal well-being! Thus may this day be made to me a preparation and pledge of an eternal rest, an eternal day, with Thee and Christ, and the spirits of the just made perfect; and Thine, Father, shall be the glory for ever!

LORD of the sabbath ! hear our vows,
On this Thy day, in this Thy house ;
And own as grateful sacrifice,
The songs which from Thy temple rise.

Thine earthly sabbaths, Lord, we love ;
But there's a nobler rest above ;
To that our longing souls aspire,
With ardent hope and strong desire.

No more fatigue, no more distress,
Nor sin, nor death, shall reach the place :
No groans shall mingle with the songs
Which warble from immortal tongues.

No rude alarms of raging foes ;
No cares to break the long repose ;
No midnight shade, no clouded sun,
But sacred, high, eternal noon.

O long expected day, begin !
Dawn on these realms of pain, and sin ;
With faith we'll tread the appointed road,
And sleep in death, to rest with God.

PRAYER.

OUR Father who art in heaven ! Once more Thou hast blessed us to see the light of a sabbath morning. One more week of toil, of strife, of joy, or of anxiety, one more week given for holy discipline, has closed upon us ; and Thou hast awakened us from sleep, with our powers renewed, and Thy mercies repeated unto us. Blessed be Thy name for this peaceful and holy change from our accustomed duties ; and for the opportunities we may have, this day, of studying Thy word, of searching into Thy dealings, and of doing Thy will. How rich was Thy love in sending Thy Son Jesus, that all, that even we, might be saved. Truly, O Father, we have been dead in trespasses and sins. We cannot look back even on the past day and week without feeling how much has been wrong within us : and when we call to mind the length of time that we knew not Thee, and cared not for Thee, our hearts are bowed down with sorrow. But as Thou didst raise Jesus from the dead by Thy mighty power ; even so may we also walk in newness of life. May this sabbath be to us a day of rest from fierce temptations, a day of growth in the knowledge of Thee, a day of active zeal in

Thy service. Bless to us all its scenes and duties ; bless the efforts of all who teach Thy word, and do the deeds of loving faith ; and draw us all closer together in the bonds of pure affection. May this day mark within us a stage of progress in the Christian life ; a stage of advancement in qualification for the Christian's heaven. Grant this, and whatever else Thou seest needful for us, for all dear to us, and for Thy whole church, through our ever blessed Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.

SUNDAY EVENING.

LUKE XXIV. 36.—*Jesus himself stood in the midst of them and saith unto them, "Peace be unto you."*

YES ! there is indeed peace, when our Saviour is with us,—when he awakens in our souls a sense of the presence of our Heavenly Father !

But without him can there be peace ? Even if the stores of mind open to the fascinated understanding treasures unbounded, and excite the imagination to its loftiest flights, can there be peace in the soul, if God is not there,—if the spirit of our Saviour is not with us ? And can the most exquisite beauty and tranquility of Nature breathe peace into that soul which has excluded from itself, by sin, the peace of God ?

Yet, if Jesus is with us, his presence *alone* gives peace. It bids us hope to be one with him, as he is with the Father ; it warns us to drive from the temple of our hearts all impure things, which may interfere with the worship of Him who is a Spirit ; when weary and heavy laden with the weight of sin—the burden of the flesh, it teaches us how to call upon Him who rejecteth not the prayer of the penitent, and will save unto the uttermost those that come unto Him with true purpose of heart ; it shows us how one, who was like unto us in all things, save without sin, overcame the world, by living after the power of an endless life ; it places before our eyes the brightness of the Father's glory,—a glory in which even *we* may be sharers.

And this heavenly being calls us his *brethren*. We know that he was made like unto us in trials, temptations, and sorrows; we trust that we may, like him, be made perfect through suffering. We pray that he may be with us to the end of our mortal lives; and that we may begin an immortal one with him in the heavenly mansion, in the presence of his Father and our Father, of his God and our God.

ON the first christian Sabbath-eve,
When his disciples met,
O'er his lost fellowship to grieve,
Nor knew the Scriptures yet;

Lo! in their midst a form was seen,
The form in which he died,
Their Master's marred and wounded mien,
His hands, his feet, his side.

Then were they glad their Lord to know,
And hailed him, yet with fear:
Jesus! again thy presence show;
Meet thy disciples here:

Be in our midst! let faith rejoice
Our risen Lord to view,
And make our spirits hear thy voice
Say,—“Peace be unto you!”

And while with thee, in social hours,
We commune through thy word,
May our hearts burn, and all our powers
Confess,—“It is the Lord!”

PRAYER.

OUR Father! Thou art the author of peace, and lover of concord. In knowledge of Thee, standeth our eternal life. Thy service is perfect freedom. Thine be the praise for the mercies of this peaceful day. Thine be the praise, if Jesus has been in the midst of us, when we have been gathered together in Thy name. And in Thy name we would close our sabbath. How sweet it is to lie down to rest, and to think that Thy watchful love attends us! How soothing is the thought that nothing can come to us without thy appointment! Thou hast given us a day of holy thoughts and purposes: now give us, if it please Thee, a week of peaceful

and steady labour ; and fit us for it with refreshing slumber. Thou hast this day given us oil to feed our lamps : may we keep them burning brightly, with humble watchfulness. If we have been inattentive or careless this day ; if we have not made the most of its blessed hours ; lead us to a godly sorrow, and pardon us through Thy forgiving love in Christ. If its hours have been spent in holy communion and holy service, fix in our hearts the movings of Thy Spirit ; so that no curtain of darkness may ever fall upon our souls. And when the resting days and the working days of earth are over, may we keep a perpetual sabbath, with all we love, in the heaven of purity and peace and joy. We ask it through our beloved Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

MONDAY MORNING.

PSALM XIX. 2.—*Day unto day uttereth speech.*

WITH the eye and affections of one who not only knows but feels that a God of love and wisdom is the Creator of all, what beauty and order do we not every where behold ! How much do we not see to cherish the sentiment, that He is in all and over all, and to call for the offering of praise and prayer !

Does winter hold its triumphant reign, freezing the air, binding in its chains the springs and rivers, spreading its snows, staying the current of vegetable life, and compelling all that breathe to seek for shelter from its influence ? “Summer and winter, fire and hail, snow and vapour, and stormy winds fulfil Thy word.” Do we see the animals at the stream quenching their thirst, or enjoying the abundant provision which is made for their support ? “They are Thy care, O God, and their sustenance is from Thy liberal hand.” Does the sun rise to enlighten and warm the earth, to give a season for labour, to gladden all that live by his cheering influences, and to give a new spring to the vegetable creation ? Do the clouds refresh the ground with their shade, and enrich it with their showers ? Do the moon and stars give a glory to the night, even greater than we

see in the bright light of day ? Does the return of darkness bring with it a time of rest, not less necessary than food for ourselves, and for all the creatures about us ? “Thine, Father, are the darkness and the light, the sun and the stars, the clouds and the rain.” Yes, every drop in the vast ocean ; every particle of this globe on which we live ; every creature, and every thing we behold, is God’s ; for He made them, and by Him they are every moment preserved.

Do we see evidences of wisdom in the law and courses of nature ? “Thine is the work, O infinitely wise and eternal Mind !” Are we astonished at the displays of power which we behold ? “Thy power, O God, like Thy wisdom, is infinite.” Do we every where behold a parental providence ? “It is Thy goodness, O my Father ; and I will bless Thee for Thy bounty to them that cannot thank Thee.”

Thus does every thing around us, the great and the minute, the wild and the cultivated, the delightful and the terrific, preach to us of God, and touch a string in the pious heart, which vibrates devotion. God is so associated with all these objects in the mind of a pious man, that wherever he may be, and whatever his employment, the sight of them recalls the thought of God ; and with the thought, a correspondent emotion and affection, which is, to Him who sees the heart, far more acceptable than the most pompous and costly offering.

Go when the morning shineth,
Go when the moon is bright,
Go when the day declineth,
Go in the hush of night ;
Go with pure mind and feeling,
Fling earthly thoughts away,
And, in thy chamber kneeling,
Do thou in secret pray.

Remember all who love thee,
All who are loved by thee ;
Pray, too, for those that hate thee,
If any such there be ;
Then for thyself in meekness,
A blessing humbly claim,
And link with each petition,
The great Redeemer’s name.

Or, if 'tis e'er denied thee
 In solitude to pray ;
 Should holy thoughts come o'er thee
 When friends are on thy way ;
 E'en then the silent breathing
 Of thy spirit raised above,
 Will reach *His* throne of glory,
 Who is mercy, truth, and love.

Oh ! not a joy or blessing
 With this can we compare,—
 The power that He hath given us,
 To pour our souls in prayer !
 Whene'er thou pin'st in sadness,
 Before His footstool fall ;
 Remember in thy gladness
 His grace who gave them all.

PRAYER.

WE will remember, O Father, Thy tender mercies and Thy loving kindnesses, for they have been ever of old. They are renewed to us every morning : they are increased continually. We joyfully bless Thee for all the tokens of Thy love. We thank Thee for our renewed power to labour ; and for the glory Thou hast offered to us, of being fellow workers with Thee through the Lord Jesus. May we then do nothing but Thy work. However lowly our service, may we render it as to Thee and not to men. May we minister to each other's wants in every form of love ; and bear each other's burdens in every form of patience. May the remembrance of the past sabbath hallow the scenes of the week, and help in overcoming its temptations. To Thee we would consecrate ourselves anew, now that it is opening on us. May its days be spent in cheerful toil, and its times of repose be hallowed by the consciousness of Thy loving presence. May our conversation be such as to adorn our Christian profession. May we be the means of edifying those with whom we meet. Help us, blessed Father, to show a firm integrity, a simple truthfulness, a holy purity, and an unwavering faith. May a sense of Thy extreme and unmerited goodness be a constant motive to us in our struggles. May Thy Spirit dwell within us, and inspire us with strength and love and wisdom.—Help all those who are striving after holiness : and be an especial support to such as are tempted

and distressed. And when, by Thy grace, we have done and borne Thy will on earth, take us to our home, O Father, and unite us again to those most dear ones, whose love Thou hast here given as our greatest treasure. And Thine be the fulness of our praise, through Jesus, our holy Mediator. Amen.

MONDAY EVENING.

JOB XXXV. 10.—*God, my Maker, who giveth songs in the night.*

YES! the declaration is as true as it is beautiful, that God, our Maker, giveth songs in the night. In the wakeful and weary hours, when no eye can witness the strife within, when no human voice can speak a word to steady the spirit in its wanderings and imaginings, He can impart peace and strength to His children, and enable them to rejoice even in tribulation. With *Him* the night shineth as the day; and in both seasons He is equally present to aid and comfort. And happy are they who, in their night-musings, are thus favoured. No instrument of human melody is half so soothing, or can so powerfully move the heart-strings and wake the notes of praise. We find many interesting and striking examples in Scripture, of the enjoyment of these songs in the night. Jacob was thus favoured; and was enabled, as he raised his head from the stony pillow on which he slept, to say, "this is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven." David was similarly privileged. "I remembered Thee," he observes, addressing the Almighty, "upon my bed, and thought of Thee when I was waking!" "O my God," he again exclaims, "my soul is cast down within me; therefore will I remember Thee; deep calleth unto deep at the voice of Thy waterspouts; all Thy waves and billows are gone over me. Yet the Lord will command His loving-kindness in the day-time, and in the *night* His *song* shall be with me."

Our blessed Lord himself was no stranger to these songs in the night, which often refreshed and comforted him. In the night of Gethsemane's agony he was thus favoured;

and amidst his unparalleled sorrow, celestial consolation was vouchsafed, and an angel strengthened him. We read, too, of Paul and Silas, that when they were thrust into the inner prison, at Philippi, for their boldness in preaching the Gospel, at midnight, strong in the blessed supports of their faith, they made their dungeon resound with the praises of God, and were compassed about with songs of joy and deliverance.

Upon *our* night watchings also is the wakeful eye of Omniscience. We may thus commune with the Deity, and find comfort in the recollection that we are covered with the wing of His providence; and that He is present as our upholder and guardian. "God, our Maker, giveth songs in the night."

NIGHT is the time for rest :
 How sweet, when labours close,
 To gather round an aching breast
 The curtains of repose ;
 Stretch the tired limbs, and lay the head
 Upon our own delightful bed !

Night is the time for dreams,
 The gay romance of life ;
 The truth that is, and truth that seems,
 Mix in fantastic strife :
 Ah ! visions less beguiling far
 Than waking dreams of daylight are.

Night is the time for toil ;
 To plough the classic field,
 Intent to find the buried spoil
 Its wealthy furrows yield ;
 Till all is ours that sages taught,
 That poets sang, and heroes wrought.

Night is the time to weep ;
 To wet with unseen tears
 Those graves of memory, where sleep
 The joys of other years ;
 Hopes that were angels at their birth,
 But died when young, like things of earth.

Night is the time to watch
 O'er ocean's dark expanse,
 To hail the Pleiades, or catch
 The full moon's earliest glance,
 That brings into the home-sick mind
 All we have loved and left behind.

Night is the time for care ;
 Brooding o'er hours mispent,
To see the spectre of despair
 Come to our lonely tent ;
Like Brutus, midst his slumbering host,
Summoned to die by Cæsar's ghost.

Night is the time to think ;
 When, from the eye, the soul
Takes flight, and, on the utmost brink
 Of yonder starry pole,
Discerns, beyond the abyss of night,
The dawn of uncreated light.

Night is the time to pray ;
 Our Saviour oft withdrew
To desert mountains far away ;
 So will his followers do,—
Steal from the throng to haunts untrod,
And commune there alone with God.

Night is the time for death :
 When all around is peace,
Calmly to yield the parting breath,
 From sin and suffering cease,
Think of Heaven's bliss, and give the sign
To parting friends.—Such death be mine !

PRAYER.

THOU, O our heavenly Father, art drawing the veil of darkness over whatever is beautiful in Thy works, as well as over whatever is corrupt in the workings of human passions. If we are fatigued with the day's labour, now Thou invitest us to repose. If we have been harassed with the day's tumult, now Thou givest us peace. If the business of the world has tempted us to forget Thee, now Thy still small voice speaks within us ; and we call to mind that Thou hast not forgotten us one moment of this day, but hast been guarding us continually from dangers seen and unseen. O Father ! pity our weakness, and pardon our transgressions. In our feebleness, be Thou our strength. We are about to lay ourselves down on the helpless bed of slumber ; but Thou art the source of every help. If it please Thee, refresh our bodies and our minds with rest. If we dream, may no unholy imaginations defile our souls. If we be watchful, let our thoughts be of Thy love. When all is hushed around

us, may we search and try our ways. When the mortal senses are inactive, may our spirits more clearly discern Thy happy presence ; and thus be drawn closer to Thee,—the home of our affections and our hopes. Into Thy hands we commit ourselves, and all we love ; through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

TUESDAY MORNING.

GENESIS XXII. 14.—*In the mountain Jehovah will provide.*

(SO TRANSLATED IN WELLBELOVED'S BIBLE.)

IT is hardly possible to conceive of a trial more severe than that by which the Divine Being proved His servant Abraham's faith, and closed that peculiar course of discipline, by which he had so long been exercised. Yet, strong in faith, he hesitated not to obey the severe injunction, "Take thy son, thy only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and go unto the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains, of which I will tell thee." The event justified and rewarded his faith. In the mountain Jehovah did provide.

These things have been treasured up, and handed down to us through the lapse of ages, for our example and encouragement. Let us learn hence the duty and wisdom of obedience to the will of God, into whatever circumstances of apparent danger or of real distress it may lead us. It will require, no doubt, much care and caution to determine in every instance, what the will of God respecting us may be, and to avoid the illusions of fancy or enthusiasm ; but having, with becoming care and diligence, sought to know what God requires of us, whatever difficulties may oppose, whatever alarm may threaten, it will be incumbent on us to persevere in the way of duty opened by His providence before us ; assured that His power will in the end reward our exertions, and recompense the temporary losses we may sustain. Abraham believed in God ; and through a dark and perplexing scene, implicitly followed the command of

God. Had he any cause to repent? Did He who imposed the trial fail to support and reward him? Many since his days have, in the severest tribulation, adhered to the path of duty. We revere their piety; we admire their fortitude; we rejoice with them in their consolations and their reward. Let us go and do likewise. "In the mountain Jehovah will provide." He will not leave nor forsake us: our strength shall be equal to our day; light shall spring up out of darkness; and, in God's own time, every trouble and perplexity shall be removed, and our recompense shall be exceedingly great and glorious.

ABRAHAM heard: believing God,
Duty's onward path he trod;
Trusting Him whose word could bless,
Won the meed of faithfulness.

Christian pilgrim, Zion-ward,
True disciple of thy Lord!
May his spirit to thy heart
Kindred faithfulness impart.

Thou may'st hear a voice within!
Let that voice attention win;
Doubt not, fear not, trust its word;
Follow on to know the Lord.

At His bidding sacrifice
More than country's, kindred's ties;
These may still be spared to thee,—
Let thy heart thy Master's be.

Daily, hourly, labour there;
Waiting, watching unto prayer;
Wait to know thy Master's will:
Watch and pray, and do it still.

Faithful to the end endure;
Then thy calling shall be sure;
Then, whene'er thy Lord shall come,
Death shall only lead thee home!

PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY Father, who causest the sun to rise and shine, and makest the day, we Thy children bless Thee for preserving us in peace and safety during the defenceless hours of sleep; keeping us living in the land of the living; and once more

awakening our powers of body and of mind for our various duties.—Accept, we beseech Thee, our morning incense of praise, and grant that, under a sense of Thy Fatherly goodness, we may this day render willing obedience to all Thy known commandments.—Give us strength equal to our day. Save us from falling into sin, and running into danger. Enable us to keep in innocence, and may integrity preserve us. And during this day and every day of our lives, may we have consciences void of offence towards Thee and towards man.—May Thy blessing rest upon this household. May we be faithful and true, affectionate and kind, one to another, bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the Saviour's law of love. Overlook our unworthiness, O Father ; forgive the sins into which any of us may have fallen. Prepare us for all the measures of Thy wise providence. May we not desire prosperity unduly, nor fear adversity beyond measure : but, in all seasons and all changes, may we rely upon Thy grace and mercy, through faith in Jesus Christ. Amen.

TUESDAY EVENING.

PSALM CVII. 7.—*And He led them forth by the right way.*

MY Father ! may I ever humbly follow in Thy way ; may I ever trust, with the full assurance of faith, that it *does* lead to Thy heavenly kingdom !

It is often very narrow and perplexed, and I cannot see where it is leading me ; broad and easy paths turn out from it, and many tempt me to walk in them ; yet, though the guiding light of Thy holy word may be half obscured by the mists of the valley, if I fix my eye steadily upon it, it will become brighter and brighter ; I shall see my way clearly in this seemingly intricate road, and even discern at the end of it the entrance to Thy heavenly mansion.

Sometimes, O my Father ! Thou dost take from us all our props and supports on the way ; we say in our hearts that there is none to help us. While we traveled happily together, we forgot that we were only strangers and pilgrims ;

now Thou takest the beloved ones from us, that we may fly to Thee only for help ; we cry unto Thee from the depth of our sorrow, and Thou dost come Thyself with Thy beloved Son to make Thy abode with us. We thought that we should have fainted by the way, yet now we are even stronger than before. We go on our way rejoicing, and see that Thou didst lead us aright.

But yet again, O my Father ! when I have been striving to find out Thy way, and to walk in it aright, I am sometimes suddenly plunged into deep and stagnant marshes, from which I seem unable to extricate myself ; or a fierce whirlwind is around me,—I am tossed to and fro,—my senses are confused, and I know not whither to go : or a thick gloom is on my soul ; the light that is in me is darkness ; I cry aloud, “Help, Lord, or I perish ;” yet the whirlwind ceaseth not,—the darkness becometh still more fearful. O Father ! though I see Thee not in the storm of fearful passions, though I perceive not Thy hand guiding me in the thick darkness of my own soul, the storm cometh from Thee, and it is Thou who permittest the gloom to fall on me, that I may afterwards listen with more humble trust to the still small voice of Thy love ; that I may fix a more steady gaze on Thy own pure light.

My Father ! may I ever have this firm confidence, that Thou dost lead us by the *right* way ! May nothing separate us from the love of Thee ! Then, whatever troubles encompass me from without or from within, my heart shall not fail, for it shall rest on the Rock of Ages.

I ASKED the Lord that I might grow
In faith and love, and every grace ;
Might more of His salvation know,
And seek more earnestly His face.

’Twas He who taught me thus to pray,
And He, I trust, hath answered prayer ;
But it has been in such a way
As almost drove me to despair.

I thought that in some favoured hour,
At once He’d answer my request,
And, by His love’s constraining power,
Subdue my soul, and give me rest.

Instead of this, He made me feel
 The hidden evils of my heart;
 And made the angry powers of hell
 Assault my soul from every part.

Nay more: with His own hand He seemed
 Intent to aggravate my woe;
 Crossed all the fair designs I schemed;
 Blasted my gourds, and laid me low.

"Lord! what is this?" I trembling cried;
 "Wilt Thou pursue Thy worm to death?"
 "'Tis in this way," the Lord replied,
 "I answer prayers for grace and faith."

"These inward trials I employ,
 From self, from pride to set thee free;
 And break thy schemes of earthly joy,
 That thou may'st find thy all in Me."

PRAYER.

FATHER of Spirits! we acknowledge Thy gracious hand which hath brought us to the close of another day.—We bless Thee that Thou gatherest us into families for mutual support, comfort and improvement. May we rejoice one with another in the day of prosperity; and, in the day of adversity and sorrow, may we lighten one another's burdens by mutual sympathy. In all the closer and more tender relations of life, may we be gentle, forbearing, kind-hearted, in honour preferring one another, and showing in every thing love unfeigned.—We commit ourselves to Thee, who never sleepest, during the night that is coming; laying ourselves down and sleeping in peace, under the persuasion that Thou art with us, to sustain and bless us. May our slumbers be refreshing both to our bodies and our spirits; and may we rise on the morrow to pursue with thankful and cheerful hearts the duties which Thy good providence hath appointed.—We beseech thee, good Father, to pardon our sins and to enable us truly to repent of them. Mercifully accept every good desire within our souls, and ripen every holy purpose. May we grow in divine knowledge, and in every Christian grace, as we advance in our earthly pilgrimage. And when time shall be no longer, may we meet again with joy in Thy eternal habitations, promised by Jesus Christ our Lord; through whom we ascribe to Thee, God blessed for ever, the highest praise and glory.
 Amen.

WEDNESDAY MORNING.

MATT. v. 4.—*Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

DO not all mourn in this world of sin and misery? The proud do not mourn, for they set self above sorrow for sin, or afflictions from without. The selfish do not mourn, for they only fret at what vexes or wounds their own narrow being.

But there are many that mourn,—many that sorrow after a godly sort. There are those that humbly mourn under the chastening hand of a Father, who afflicteth not willingly His children;—they shall be comforted. Their hearts will be weaned from a changing world, and indissolubly bound to that which changeth not; for where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also. And from those blissful abodes, rays will shine on their hearts; a purer flame will be kindled within them; they will see their Father's love in all; the world around will glow with new beauty; and they will be comforted;—*their* souls are blessed.

Others there are that mourn over evils caused by the sinfulness of man;—they will be led by them to purify themselves from all pollutions of the flesh, that they may help their brethren onward; and, turning their highest powers to this great object, they will, by degrees, see seeming evil still producing good in the hands of an infinitely wise and benevolent Being, and will justify the ways of God to men; they will at last learn, in some measure, to see everything as God sees it; they will perceive that all is very good;—they will be comforted.

But others mourn in greater depths of sorrow. They have within them the divine life; yet they feel that it is no longer pure and without spot before God; they sin so often, and after so many warnings, so many resolutions, that they hardly venture to believe that the spirit is truly willing. Yet this sorrow, almost overwhelming as it some-

times is, may subdue the proud spirit ;—it may lead us to take the yoke of Christ upon us, and then he will give us rest ;—it may help us to purify our souls by doing the will of God. Will not sorrow then be blest, however grievous it may have been ? Shall we not own the gracious hand which strikes that it may heal,—which afflicts that we may be comforted ?

COME, ye who mourn, and dry your tears,
And let your sorrows cease ;
For lo ! the Son of man appears,
To calm the sufferer's anxious fears,
And soothe his soul to peace.

Come, ye who mourn a sinful choice,
Come and efface the stain ;
For lo ! the blest Redeemer's voice
Bids every contrite heart rejoice,
And whispers peace again.

Come, ye who mourn with woes oppress,
And cast your cares behind ;
Come, lean upon your Saviour's breast,
And hush the anxious soul to rest,
And calm the troubled mind.

Come, ye who weep departed friends,
Come, all to sorrow driven ;
Lo ! o'er the grave hope's rainbow bends,
Whose beauty from the earth extends,
And reaches up to heaven.

PRAYER.

THOU, O Father, despisest not the sighings of a contrite spirit. Thou knowest what is in our hearts, and where our chief desires and affections are centered. Oh that they may ever be, where in our best moments we wish them to be ! Weaken within us those earth-born emotions that deaden the holier feelings of our souls. When we are tempted with evil thoughts and wrong passions, may we have strength to cast them out, resolutely directing our minds to the blessed truths of the Gospel. May we look upon each hour as a special gift from Thee, and employ it in the duty that Thou didst design for it. May each pleasure and mercy Thou sendest, be a new tie of gratitude to bind our hearts to Thee. May we find that labour *for* Thee is

rest *in* Thee. May trials *from* Thee become helpers *to* Thee. If gloom should be our portion, and the work of duty should be hard; if our affections should go forth, and meet no return; if the objects of our care should fail us, and disappointment and anxiety becloud our path;—even then, dearest Father, may our faith in Thee be strong, yea stronger. Then may we find ourselves nearer to Thee; happy in thy favour; and full of joy because we are counted worthy to share in our Saviour's sufferings. And when the work of faith is over, may the fulness of love be the portion of our souls, in the home of the Father and the Son. Amen.

WEDNESDAY EVENING.

JOHN XVI. 7.—*It is expedient for you that I go away.*

IT was for many reasons best for the disciples that their Lord should be removed from them; but never was his image to be erased from their hearts. The memory of the just is blessed, the righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance. He only went away to be with them more completely. When he was personally present he was often misunderstood, and his lesson failed, in many instances, of their due influence. When he was gone, they lived the last year over again. His words now were received into good ground; those worldly desires which choked the good seed were torn away; and abundant fruit showed the heavenly nature of the plant and the goodness of the soil. It was itself a mournful event that he should depart from them, but he did not leave them comfortless; they were sorrowful, but their sorrow was turned into joy; they beheld him no more, but the Holy Spirit which the Father sent in his name, taught them all things, and brought to their recollection whatever he had said unto them. *Once* Jesus abode *with* them, *now* he abode *in* them; once his *form* cheered their eyes, now his *presence* gladdened their hearts. It was no less true than wonderful, that with the departed they could enjoy a closer communion than with those who were present with them. Instead of the friendship of dying men, it was now the fellowship of immortal spirits.

COME, let us join our friends above,
 That have obtained the prize,
 And on the eagle wings of love
 To joys celestial rise :
 Let all the saints terrestrial sing
 With those to glory gone :
 For all the servants of our King,
 In earth and heaven, are one.

One family, we dwell in him,
 One church, above, beneath ;
 Though now divided by the stream,—
 The narrow stream of death.
 One army of the living God,
 To His command we bow ;
 Part of the host have crossed the flood,
 And part are crossing now.

Lo ! thousands to their endless home
 Are swiftly borne away ;
 And we are to the margin come,
 And soon must launch as they.
 O God ! be Thou our constant guide :
 Then, when Thy word is given,
 Shall death's cold flood its waves divide,
 And land us safe in heaven.

PRAYER.

EVER blessed Father ! While, in our ignorance and frailty, we think that good, which is not good ; while we sometimes implore a curse instead of a blessing ; Thou knowest what is really for our highest good, and in Thy love Thou sendest us Thy chastenings. Often have our prayers been answered in a way that we expected not ; but always, we are humbly confident, Thou dost answer, in Thine own good time, and in Thine own most excellent way, every prayer that is offered in the spirit of the Saviour's trust and obedience. We rejoice that, while every thing on earth fades away ; while, one by one, those ties are broken which bind us to this present world ; while all is to us uncertain, and we know not even what a day may bring forth ; we are enabled to say that there is One whose mercy never changeth. Hallelujah, for the Father omnipotent reigneth ! Oh, may our hearts be open, to perceive the ends of Thy dealings towards us. Make us more holy, more heavenly. May our life be hid with Christ in Thee.

May we lay our treasures in the mansions above. May we be ever watchful and humble, that we may receive the teachings of Thy Spirit, and live closely with Thee. And when Thou takest us from our earthly home, may we find an eternal home in the enjoyment of Thy love, with all the holy ones whom the Saviour has led to Thee. Accept us, through Thy redeeming mercy in Christ Jesus. Amen.

THURSDAY MORNING.

PSALM XLII. 11.—*Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God.*

“WHY art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?” Does thy dejection spring from the consciousness of great imperfection in thy religious character; of wrong habits not yet subdued; of wrong dispositions too often exercised; of “talents wasted, time mis-spent?” Dost thou feel apprehensive lest thou shouldst fail of reaching the promised inheritance? Dost thou lament thy limited usefulness, thy inability to accomplish the purposes which thy benevolence prompts thee to form? Dost thou mourn for good resolutions which have vanished like the morning cloud or the early dew? Dost thou reflect with distress or negligence in the work assigned thee; or impatience under the afflictions with which thy Father has visited thee; or the little progress which thou hast made in subjecting thy desires and dispositions to the law of God; Dost thou fear lest thy fortitude should be unable to resist the temptations and the difficulties which surround thee; or lest thy principles should prove too weak to withstand the constant influence of present interests and cares and pleasures, which tend to check or stop thee on thy progress heavenward? Certainly thou hast room for caution, but not for despair. Blessed are they who mourn with godly sorrow, for they shall be comforted. Do not forget that thou art in the hands of a wise and gracious Parent, who knoweth our frame, who remembereth that we are but dust; that as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. Our unallowed defects and imperfections should indeed render us watchful and humble;

but they should not exclude the cheering rays of divine mercy. The promises of the gospel, while they afford no hope to the impenitent and disobedient, give the best consolation to the weary and heavy laden. I cannot doubt the mercy of God, for it rests on His own gracious declaration. His sacrifices are a broken spirit ; and most assuredly a broken and a contrite heart He will not despise. Let me then here, in the hour of holy retirement, lay open my heart, with all its wants and weaknesses, before Him who can read the language of the silent tear ; who needs not the aid of words to understand my secret aspirations after obedience to His will,—after the spirit of him who hath trodden before us in the path of holy obedience. He, who, in ways which, perhaps, we cannot fully understand, communicates His gracious aid to those who humbly and steadily seek His favour, will answer my habitual supplications with strength in temptation, and with guidance in moral perplexities, such as they cannot know, who, through high ideas of their own firmness and strength of principle, restrain prayer before God, and lean not on the rock of their salvation. Why then art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me ? Hope thou in God ; the God of grace and of all consolation ; the Almighty Guardian of those who love and fear Him ; the gracious Being who will make it well with them here, and well with them for ever. Let me seek His favour and His gracious succour with full purpose of heart. Let me not sink under difficulties, but lean on His powerful arm. Let me be sober and watch unto prayer ; and thus my end will be full of peace and hope.

Oh ! why cast down, my soul ?
Oh ! why despair ?
Why murmur at thy lot
Of grief and care ?
Through every scene of pain,
Let not thy heart complain,
For peace will yet remain
If God be there.

The glorious morning's light
Dawns bright and fair ;
But soon the heavens grow black,
The lightnings glare.

Yet the red lightning's way,
And the sun's cheering ray,
The self-same love display,
For God is there.

Then welcome, O my soul !
The will divine ;
And to Almighty love
Thyself resign.

Since love divine appears
To wipe away my tears,
And banish all my fears,
His will be mine !

PRAYER.

OUR Father ! If weeping endureth for the night, Thou sendest joy with the morning. How can we resist the tokens of Thy love ? Our hearts must indeed be dead, if we can see thy hand creating all things new, and spreading a fresh veil of beauty over Thy works, and doubt of Thy loving kindness unto us. We will take the cup of salvation, which Thy Son holds out to us, and call upon Thy name. And we ask not, Father, what shall be within that cup. If it be filled with disappointment or anxiety or pain or privation, still Thou hast prepared our lot, and we would meet it trustfully. Even as the Saviour prayed unto Thee, 'Thy will be done.' Oh give us strength to bear it and to do it. Suffer us not to remain under the bondage of fear ; but give unto us the healthful spirit of thy grace,—the spirit of love, of joy, and of a sound mind. If we sorrow, let it be after that godly sort, which shall draw our souls nearer to him who, for our sakes, was acquainted with grief. If we are glad, may our happy powers find their appointed work in cheerful service, bearing the burdens of the heavy laden, and cheering the dark lot of the lonely. Father, if Thou givest us the cup of trial, give us also the bread of life. May the heavenly words of Thy truth, be our portion this day. Suffer not any unworthy motive to influence our hearts. May the suggestions of self-love, and the cravings of the lower appetites, and all temptations from without, as well as the spirit of distrust within, be overcome by faith in Thy promises : and may our souls be full of light in Thy love, for evermore. Grant it to us, and to all dear to us, through Thine infinite mercy in Christ Jesus. Amen.

THURSDAY EVENING.

ISAIAH XXVI. 3.—*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.*

THIS peace is the peace of God which passeth all understanding, which the Saviour has promised to bestow on those who love him ;—this is calm and bright in the midst of storms and darkness ;—the world knoweth it not, and can neither give it, nor take it away.

It is promised to him who stayeth his soul on the Rock of Ages ; who seeketh no help elsewhere ; who loveth nothing in comparison with Him who is perfect love.

Why doth the prophet give this sure word of comfort to him that stayeth his mind on God ? Because he *trusteth*. In whom should we trust, but in Him from whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things ? When the weak mortal *clings with confidence* to the Omnipotent Immortal, what *can* he fear ? What *ought* to disturb his trust ?

And how often, instead of thus yielding ourselves to God, and partaking of His Holy Spirit, and rejoicing in all that He doth, because He doth it, and it must therefore be very good ; how often do we fret ourselves that our way hath not been God's way, and that our fond and empty visions have vanished into air !—*Then* we have no peace ! How often, when we have wandered from God, instead of staying our souls on Him who can bring us back, do we seek after false guides, or ask of ourselves the way to peace ! How often, when sorrows come upon us, do we forget from whom they come, and lose the peace of God, because we have not trusted in Him !

Oh may we ever strive to unite our wills with God's, and then nothing can happen to harass our souls ; may we trust in Him with perfect faith, and then He will give us perfect peace.

THERE is a calm the poor in spirit know,
That softens sorrow, and that lightens woe ;
There is a peace that dwells within the breast,
When all without is stormy and distrest ;
There is a light that gilds the darkest hour,
When dangers threaten, and when troubles lour :
That calm to faith and hope and love is given ;
That peace remains when all beside is riven ;
That light shines down to man, direct from heaven.

PRAYER.

FATHER! how sweet it is to lie down in peace, and know that Thou guardest our slumbers! We would not fear the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor the terrors of devouring flames, nor the attacks of lawless men. As Thou wert with Jesus on the mountain, so be with us. May our wakeful thoughts, and even the visions of our sleep, be Thine. But, Father, we would not trust in Thee, only when our own powers are inactive. Lead us to stay on Thy supports, when they of this world are trusting to themselves. In the activity of life, and in the contention of our daily labour, may we be working for Thee, and find that Thou blessest our toil. While the ungodly are distracted with anxieties, may we trust in Thy promises of food and raiment to such as seek first the heavenly kingdom. May we make any sacrifices that the spirit of Thy word enjoins, and then calmly wait on Thee. When sudden calamities terrify those who live without Thy law, may we remember that nothing is sudden unto Thee, and that time and chance are not known in Thy presence. May we faithfully apply the means of holiness, and the means of usefulness Thou hast granted unto us; and in patient hope, leave the result with Thee. May it ever be the joy of our lives to be about our Father's business. Guide us by Thy Holy Spirit. Make the way of duty plain unto us, and may we quietly wait for the movings of Thy grace:—content, O Father, with Thy will, and quiet as a child. Watch over all those that are dear unto us. Calm the turbulence of evil passions, and lay every anxiety to rest in Thy love. And when earthly toil is over, and we need no longer the refreshment of bodily repose, may we enter into the rest of perfect trust, and the peace of endless love, which passeth all present understanding. We ask it through our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.

FRIDAY MORNING.

PSALM LXII. 1.—*Truly my soul waiteth upon God, from Him cometh my salvation.*

WE should fix our thoughts on God:—we are to spend with Him an eternity. He has communicated to us His

own image : endowed us with wonderful powers of body and mind, subjected the visible world to our use, and surrounded us with blessings. Not only great temporal benefits, but vast spiritual mercies we have received from God. He has sent His Son, a divine Redeemer to a guilty world, to open the way of reconciliation and peace. He has also promised to us the earnest of His Spirit to conspire with all the purposes and efforts of grace conducing to human salvation. He has become the repairer of our decayed frames, the enlivener of our dead souls, the infuser of spiritual light into our dark minds, the kindler of spiritual warmth in our cold hearts ; the imparters of spiritual strength to our feeble powers, and the author of glorious liberty to captives under the vassalage of lust and passion. He has promised to aid us in the performance of our duties ; in fulfilling the conditions of salvation, in order to our becoming sons of God. He is our guide in the ways of truth ; our counsellor in all doubts ; our support in all needs ; our succour in all distresses ; our guard against temptations ; our comforter in sadness ; our monitor in peril, and our friend at all times. He enables us to cherish good thoughts, to kindle holy desires, to strengthen pious resolutions, and to further honest endeavours.

He teaches us how to pray ; and then answers our prayers. He gives us great bounties ; and then tells us how to relish them. He imparts opportunities ; and advises how to improve them. He arms us with power ; and instructs us where to be useful. He fires us with passions ; and then metes out their limits and uses. He has filled us with earthly and heavenly attributes ; and then marked out to each its station and glory. He excites us to action by every proper stimulant ; and regulates that action by every religious motive. He has made us all we are ; and promised us all we hope for.

What then can we return to God for His manifold goodness. Let us give Him glory for all the good works performed by us ; all the good fruit growing on us ; all the good habits established in us. Let not our souls be barred against Him by vain conceits, and vicious inclinations ; but

let us make them holy temples of His divinity, royal thrones of His majesty, bright orbs of His heavenly light, and welcome abodes of His blissful presence. Let us remember that the only way of coming to happiness in the next world, is coming to God in this.

God, my strength, to Thee I pray !
Turn not Thou Thine ear away ;
Gracious to my cry attend,
While the suppliant knee I bend.

Grant me, Lord, Thy peace and light,
To direct my steps aright,
To protect, in trial's hour,
From the world's ensnaring power.

Cleanse me from the guilt that lies
Wrapt within my heart's disguise ;
Let me thence, by Thee renewed,
All presumptuous sin exclude.

Let my tongue, from rashness free,
Speak the words approved by Thee :
And to Thine all-searching eyes
Let my thoughts accepted rise.

Hear, and to my soul display
Mercy's all enlivening ray ;
Let it lead, in faith and love,
Onward to a home above.

PRAYER.

O MOST merciful and gracious God ! Thou art the fountain of all mercy and goodness. Thou hast opened Thy hand of mercy to fill us with blessings, and with the sweet effects of thy loving kindness. As Thou hast spread Thy hand over us for a covering, so also enlarge our hearts with thankfulness, and fill our mouths with praise ; that our duty and returns to Thee, may be great as the grace we stand in need of. May what Thou hast sown in mercy, spring up in duty.—Let us walk in the light of Thy favour, and in the paths of Thy commandments : that, living here to the glory of our Lord, we may spend eternity in giving praise to Thy exalted and ever glorious name. Guide us, O Lord, in all the varieties and changes of the world ; that in all things which may happen, we may preserve an evenness and a tranquillity of spirit ; that our souls may be

wholly resigned to Thy divinest will and pleasure ; never murmuring at Thy chastisements and Fatherly correction ; never being high minded or forgetful, if it please Thee to grant us prosperity.—Fix our thoughts, our hopes, our desires, on eternal things. Teach us to despise the world. Enrich our understandings with an eternal treasure of Divine truths, that we may know Thy will ; and give us a firm purpose, knowing, to perform it.— O Lord, strengthen our faith, confirm our hope, and give us a daily increase of charity ; that this day and ever we may serve Thee according to all our opportunities and capacities, growing from grace to grace, in the knowledge and likeness of our beloved Saviour. Amen.

FRIDAY EVENING.

JOHN XXI. 17.—*He saith unto him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"*

"PETER was grieved because he said unto him the third time, lovest thou me !" And well he might be, for it must have reminded him of his three denials, when his Lord turned and looked on him, and he went out and wept bitterly. He who had been loudest in his protestations, was the first to fall ; and yet Jesus knew that he had a strength of love which would cast out his fear, and render him a brave and faithful shepherd.

We, too, have expressed our love to Christ. We should be grieved if it were questioned. We take his name upon us ; we seek his spirit in our prayers ; perhaps sit at his table ; and yet have we, who have broken bread with him, never lifted up our heel against him, and brought his name into dishonour, by the inconsistency of our conduct ? Possibly, conscience may acquit us ; and yet have we not neglected and forsaken, if we have not wilfully denied, him ? In the hour of joy, have we not closed our ears to his prophecies of sorrow, saying, "These things shall not be unto us ?" In distress have we not gone forth from his

presence, to sorrow as those without hope? Have we watched with his brethren in their agony? Have we cheered them in the hour of their trial? Have we helped them to bear their crosses? Have we been willing to take up our own, to deny ourselves, and follow Christ, in evil report, as well as in good report? Do we count all things but loss, that we might win him? Do we feel as if nothing can separate us from his love, and from that of the Father, whom he came to reveal to us?

If we have been favoured with blissful communion with him; if he has revealed himself to our hearts, and we think we love him, so that we could do anything to serve him; if we feel ourselves his friends, and have been always ready to own our affection for him, before those who might despise us for it; let us show it, in the way that he pointed out to Peter, by feeding his sheep; strengthening the diseased, and healing the sick; binding up that which was broken, and bringing again that which was driven away; and seeking those who were lost. We cannot love him whom we do not see, unless our hearts are warmed towards our brethren, and his. We cannot love *them*, unless we lead them to those still waters, which we have found ourselves so sweet, and teach them to repose in the shade of the tree of life. The love of Christ must constrain us to live no longer to ourselves; we must "walk in love, as Christ also loved us and hath given himself for us;" we must not only be pure in heart, but must show a willingness, like his, to make a sacrifice of personal ease, and to give up enjoyments, which to us are innocent, and to go whither we would not, that we may be the means of saving others from temptation, and delivering them from evil; and then Christ and the Father will love us, and they will come unto us, and make their abode with us.

THOUGH sorrows rise, and dangers roll
In waves of darkness o'er my soul;
Though friends are false, and love decays,
And few and evil are my days;
Yet e'en in nature's utmost ill,
I love Thee, Lord! I love Thee still!

Though conscience, fiercest of my foes,
 Swells with remembered guilt my woes ;
 And memory points, with busy pain,
 To grace and mercy given in vain ;
 Though every thought has power to kill,
 I love Thee, Lord ! I love Thee still !

Oh, by the woes Messiah bore,
 And in his grief was loved the more ;
 By these, my pangs, whose healing smart
 Thy grace hath planted in my heart ;
 I know, I feel Thy bounteous will !
 Thou lov'st me, Lord ! Thou lov'st me still !

PRAYER.

GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, oh, fill us with his devotion, his love of souls, his meekness, his patient and self-denying zeal ; and give us grace that we may walk after his example, in all holiness, purity and goodness. Thou seest the children of men who are yet walking in a vain shew, and following evil devices ; and the many who cry, from the dark wilderness of ignorance and sin, 'no man careth for our souls.' May we ourselves be converted unto Thee, the living God ; and then go forth, with an earnest and loving heart, to seek and to save those that are lost. And oh, preserve us from the temptations of prosperity and of adversity ; of self-indulgence, and of envy ; and grant that in the spirit of a Christlike devotedness unto Thee and to the eternal interests of the human soul, we may run and not be weary, we may walk and not faint. May the love of Christ constrain us to live unto him that died for us ; that, when we die, we may die in the Lord, and be received into the fulness of Thy love in him. Amen.

SATURDAY MORNING.

JOHN IV. 34.—*Jesus saith unto them, My [meat is to do the will of Him that sent me.*

WHAT our blessed Saviour said of himself, should be applicable to his followers, that it is their meat and drink to do their Father's will. And, as the natural appetite is carried out towards food, though we should not reflect on the necessity of it for the preservation of our

lives ; so are the disciples of Jesus carried with a natural and unforced bias towards that which is good and commendable. It is true, external motives are many times of great use, to excite and stir up this inward principle ;— especially in its infancy and weakness, when it is often so languid that the man himself can scarcely discern it, hardly being able to move one step forward, except when he is urged by his hopes or fears, by the pressure of an affliction, or the sense of a mercy, by the authority of the law, or the persuasion of others. Now if such a person be conscientious and uniform in his obedience, and earnestly groaning under a sense of his dulness, and desirous to perform his duties with more spirit and vigour ; these are the first motions of the divine life, which, though it be faint and weak, will surely be cherished by the influences of heaven, and grow into greater maturity. But he who is utterly destitute of this inward principle, and doth not aspire to it, but contents himself with those performances, whereunto he is prompted by education or custom, by the fear of Hell, or carnal notions of Heaven, can no more be accounted a religious person than a puppet can be called a man. This forced and artificial religion is commonly heavy and languid, like the motion of a weight forced upwards ; it is cold and spiritless, like the uneasy compliance of a wife married against her will, who carrieth it dutifully towards the husband whom she doth not love, out of some sense of virtue and honour. Hence also this religion is scanty and niggardly, especially in those duties which do the greatest violence to men's carnal inclinations ; and those slavish spirits will be sure to do no more than is absolutely required ; 'tis a law that compels them, and they will be loath to go beyond what it stints them to ; nay, they will be ever putting such glosses on it, as may leave themselves the greatest liberty. Whereas the spirit of true religion is frank and liberal, far from such peevish and narrow reckoning ; and he who hath given himself entirely unto God, will never think he doth too much for Him.

O God ! my strength, my hope !
On Thee I cast my care :
With humble confidence look up
And know Thou hear'st my prayer.

Give me on Thee to wait,
Till I can all things do ;
On Thee, almighty to create,
Almighty to renew.

I want a sober mind ;
A self-renouncing will,
That tramples down and casts behind
The baits of pleasing ill ;
A soul inured to pain,
To hardship, grief and loss,
Bold to take up, firm to sustain
The consecrated cross.

I want a godly fear ;
A quick discerning eye,
That looks to Thee when sin is near,
And sees the tempter fly ;
A spirit still prepared
And armed with jealous care ;
Forever standing on its guard,
And watching unto prayer.

I want a heart to pray,
To pray and never cease,
Never to murmur at Thy stay,
Or wish my suffering less.
This blessing above all—
Always to pray, I want ;
Out of the deep on Thee to call,
And never, never faint.

I want a true regard,
A single steady aim,
(Unmoved by threatening or reward,)
To Thee and Thy great name ;
A jealous, just concern
For Thine immortal praise ;
A pure desire that all may learn
And glorify Thy grace.

I rest upon Thy word ;
Thy promise is for me ;
My succour and salvation, Lord,
Shall surely come from Thee.
But let me still abide,
Nor from my hope remove,
Till Thou my patient spirit guide
Into Thy perfect love.

PRAYER.

O LORD, our heavenly Father ! when we neglect our duty in any respect, we feel backward to make our appearance before Thee. Let us free our minds from all consciousness of guilt and of self-reproach, by a constant and a steady discharge of our whole duty. When we cannot look to Thee with full confidence, we are apt to omit devotion entirely. Oh let us cast off our sins and negligences and evil thoughts ; and with contrite hearts ask Thy pardoning mercy. May we experience that inward peace which religion alone can give. May we live nearer and closer unto Thee our God. Oh that there were such a heart in us, that we could at all times live, act, and speak as in Thy presence. Thou knowest, indeed, that, in our better moments, we would not willingly transgress even the least of Thy commandments ; yet how dull and languid have been our affections ! how inadequate the feelings of our hearts for the numberless blessings which from day to day thou showerest down upon us. Oh may there be greater devotedness to Thee ; and a more earnest purpose, as followers of Jesus, to bless our brethren of mankind, to promote their present and their everlasting welfare. Give us the spirit of humble trust and of patient endurance. Whatever may be our trials, enable us, we beseech Thee, to bear them with resignation and cheerfulness, as becometh the faithful disciples of him who endured the cross and despised the shame for us men, and for our salvation ; and whose prayer it was, ‘Father, not my will, but Thine be done.’ Amen.

SATURDAY EVENING.

LUKE VII. 50.—*Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace.*

PEACE ! It was a thing she had not fully known since she had left its paths,—those ways of wisdom and pleasantness. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked ; and she had no peace while her sins were many. Nor yet was there perfect peace in that transport of penitence and love in which she stood before Jesus. That was victory, but now

Christ gives her *peace* : not as the world giveth, gave he unto her ; her heart was not to be troubled, nor to be afraid. Her faith was strong ; and the belief that Christ had promised her rest, would be her safeguard in the hour of peril. Yet her tears were not for ever dried ! How often, in the midst of her most sacred musings, would some impure thought rise up from the vaults of memory !—but then her faith would save her, and she would be able to banish it, and it would even add to her present holiness, by teaching her humility and self-distrust. How often would she feel her powers for good weakened by her past misconduct !—but yet love would supply the deficiency, and an ardour, before unknown, would inspire, with unwonted force, the energies that were spared her ! How often would the remembrance of past sin rise up, like a thick vapour, till faith should save her, and show that

“The cloud we so much dread
Is big with mercies, and will break
In blessings on our head !”

“Go in peace !” May we apply the words of the Saviour to ourselves ! Yet how few of us can ! Who can say, I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith ? Who can feel that the conflict is over, even if it has begun ? May God give us such an earnest love of Him, that we may gain the victory over our many foes ; We cannot have *perfect* repose till we are perfectly holy ; but the warmer our love to the God of goodness, the less shall we experience that fear in which is torment.

“Go in peace,” then, may we hear the Saviour say to us, if, like the penitent woman, we come to him with lowly and contrite hearts,—if we bewail our sins with that true sorrow which bringeth repentance not to be repented of. Let us not slight the blessed invitation,—“Come unto me, *all* ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart ; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

BEHOLD the gospel mercy seat !
Let penitence in faith draw near :
Lo ! truth and grace with justice meet,
The humble, contrite soul to cheer.

When it bewails the stains of sin,
And shuns the unrighteous thought or deed,
Thou givest mercy, Lord, within,
And grace to help in time of need.

No longer let the gloom and fears
Of nature's twilight sink the heart ;
The Saviour's words dispel our tears,
And peace, and hope, and light impart.

He leads us to a Father's throne ;
And the sure hope through him is given,
That, when the work of faith is done,
We have a sinless home in heaven.

PRAYER.

ONCE more, O Thou most tender Father, hast Thou brought the week to close on us in peace ! Here we raise the altar of thanksgiving, and declare that hitherto our Lord hath helped us. If our hearts have been disquieted within us, *Thou* didst not send the trouble. If we have yielded to temptation, *Thou* didst not make it too strong for us. If the week has been barren in holy purposes and endeavours, *Thou* wouldst have made the wilderness to blossom as the rose, if only we had looked to Thee.—O Father, we know not which most to wonder at ; Thy long-suffering, or our ingratitude. When, Lord, shall we be wholly Thine, as we long to be ? When shall we overcome the sluggishness of our baser nature, and the violence of our lower passions, and love and serve Thee with an undivided heart ? Lord we believe : help Thou our unbelief ! May we cast aside all self-seeking, and lay our burden of iniquity low at the foot of the cross. May we crucify every unholy desire, and allow of no impure remembrance. May our thoughts be of Thy love, and of our duty. Now, O Father, we are giving ourselves up to unconscious sleep : watch over us, and preserve us from outward danger, and still more from inward temptation. May the night be holy to us : that we may be prepared for the holy day that shall open to us, whether in this life or in that which is to come. We leave ourselves in thy loving care, through our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Second Week.

SUNDAY MORNING.

REV. XXI. 4.—*And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain ; for the former things are passed away.*

“GOD shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” Tears are the visible and affecting expressions of distress ; and, therefore, to say there shall be no more tears, is to say, that all those causes of sorrow, which exist in the present world, shall be eternally removed. “There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying ;” because these are the causes which rend the hearts of men, and suffuse their eyes with tears.

There shall be no more tears of separation. The longest and most painful separations are those which are caused by death ; and what eye has not been dimmed with tears by this ? He must have been unhappy indeed over whose unmoistened grave no tears are shed, and whose death has occasioned no regrets. But the number of those is few. Death rends all hearts. When Joseph died, the children of Israel wept sore. “My Father ! my Father !” exclaimed Elisha, when Elijah was taken away from him. “O my Son Absalom ! O Absalom, my Son, my Son,” said the much-moved David, as he “went up to the chamber over the gate,” that he might weep alone. And when his friend Lazarus died, “Jesus wept.” Well, be it so. To weep and to be wept is the irreversible decree as to man below ; but then, so much the more welcome the state we hope for. A great voice is heard out of heaven, “And there shall be no

more death." The sight would be a blot in the tabernacle of God. The rigid limb, the silent pulse, the breathless lip, the pallid cheek, the fixed and darkened eye; these, these are not scenes for heaven. But this is the decree:—"There shall be no more death." This shall restore and perpetuate your friendships, and wipe the tears of separation away for ever.

And with the tears of separation pass away all those which pain wrings from the tortured body, or sorrow from the wounded spirit. Martyrs,—you have been racked and torn; but there is now no more pain for you; for, like your Master, you have exchanged your crown of thorns, for a crown of glory. Patient sufferers from disease,—you could weep, though you could not murmur; but wearisome nights are no longer appointed you. Nor does the spirit, full charged with its inward griefs, pour the floods into the eyes. No publican here smites on his breast, exclaiming, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" No Peter, the cowardly denier of his Lord, goes out to weep bitterly. No tears of shame and grief are shed over barrenness of spirit and hardness of heart. — Zion no longer cries, "the Lord hath forgotten me." "There shall be neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain."

And we may add, that there shall not be even tears of joy. For what do they suppose? The joy which finds relief in tears supposes a previous anguish; and that the change from one state to another, shakes the feebleness of mortality. Or it supposes that we are so unused to strong emotions, that our measure of joy is soon filled up; that even the bliss of earth may be too copious for the contracted vessel of our hearts; and, therefore, so easily overflows in tears. But there shall be no such alternations in heaven; nor will the capacity for blessedness be thus limited. Joy will not be so much a stranger that we shall weep at meeting it. It will be habit, not accident. It will be, not the transient flash which dazzles, overpowers, and disappears; but the fixed and steady element in which we shall live for ever.

And the text gives the reason of all this;—"The former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne

said, Behold, I make all things new." How impressive and sublime is the scene thus presented ! Under the throne of him who is arrayed in the glory of the Father, lie heaven, and earth—the present seat of death and sorrow and pain. He speaks, and they vanish, and the former things are passed away. He speaks again, and a new heaven and earth spring into being. "The tabernacle of God is with men ;" and He that sitteth upon the throne saith, "Behold, I make all things new." What a dream will then our earthly sufferings and labours, our joys and our sorrows, appear ! They have passed away, and a new world opens to our view to abide for ever.

Oh for the winged seraph's power to soar
 Into those fields of everlasting light
 Where darkness is not ! Oh for power to ascend
 To those blest regions to which Jesus rose
 From the dark tomb, the herald of our way ;
 Himself the first fruits of the sleeping dead !
 Oh for the freedom of those sons of God,
 The bright, immortal spirits of the just,
 No longer held by bonds of earth and flesh,
 Of sense and passion ; all whose trials o'er,
 Whose sorrows ended, and whose joys complete,
 Now stand before the throne of the Most High,
 Seeing as they are seen, and knowing Him,
 The eternal One, even as they are known !
 Arise, my trembling, fainting soul, arise,
 And join this glorious band of worshipers.
 See where they stand, a host of witnesses
 To tell thee 'tis thy Father's house, thy home,
 In which they wait thy coming. Like thyself,
 They once sustained their mighty conflict here.
 Like thee they toiled and suffered, hoped and feared.
 They passed through darkness, deep as ever hung
 Over thy path ; through ways as rough and hard
 As ever wore thy tired and pilgrim feet.
 Wilt thou, then, sink, or murmur at thy lot
 When tried, or charge thy Father foolishly ?
 Lord, I believe ; help thou my unbelief !
 Lord, I believe ; increase my faith !
 Oh for a will entirely bowed to thine !
 Oh for a heart in every thought so pure,
 In every spring of feeling so refined,
 That e'er this body may a temple be
 Meet for Thy Holy Spirt ! Father ! hear,
 Oh hear my prayer, and answer, and forgive !
 Thy kingdom come, O God, within my soul !

Thy will be done in me as 'tis in heaven !
Then, then will faith its highest triumphs prove,
When I am perfected in heavenly love.
Then, with a seraph's wing, my soul shall rise,
And join, e'en here, the worship of the skies.
Then will my highest pleasures be my last,
And heaven begin before the world be past.

PRAYER.

LORD ! We are continually with Thee. Impress this thought upon our hearts, that they may be pure, and glad, and grateful. Let us not forget Thy presence, and Thy help. All Thy past dealings towards us show Thy goodness, care, and bounty. When we know and feel that Thou art with us, our weakness is turned to strength ; our darkness, to light ; our doubts and fears, to hope and confidence. It is then that temptation loses its power, and sin its dominion, and trials their weight. It is then that crosses are borne in patience, and duties performed with pleasure. Lord ! we need, we ask, a lively and constant sense of Thine omnipotence, to make us holy and happy. O Lord, we implore Thy guidance. Thy counsel alone can direct us in the way of peace and safety. It is Thy wisdom that makes us truly wise. Make us to know and follow the teachings of Thy word, and Spirit, and the example of Thy Son, that we may honour Thee on earth, and be prepared for the mansions of glory in Thy kingdom. May we ever contemplate Thee, as the sum of all perfection, the chief good, the greatest and most glorious Being in the universe ; infinitely worthy of the homage, praise, and obedience of all Thy creatures. May we see that without Thee we are nothing ; and that all our springs of life and happiness are in Thee. Grant us this pious concentration of feeling and thought, that our souls may be united to Thee by a holy, supreme, and constant love. And when we view Thee as the only object of our supreme regard in heaven, may nothing on the earth destroy or abate our love to Thee. Let us not esteem the creature more than the Creator ; or lose sight of the Giver in His manifold gifts. Purify and elevate the desires of our souls, so that it may be our study and delight to do Thy will and please Thee in all things. So long as we dwell on earth, may we live as pilgrims and strangers ; and lay up our treasure and have our conversation in heaven. We ask it in the name of our ever blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

SUNDAY EVENING.

REV. XXII. 1.—*And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

WHAT a glorious vision to comfort and encourage us in this lower world !

Here the water of life often runs in small, and hardly perceptible streams, with difficulty making its way along through all the roughnesses and hindrances of this vale of our pilgrimage, sometimes almost lost amid quicksands and marshes. *There* it majestically rolls on its full tide in a river, overshadowed on each side by trees bearing their fresh, luxuriant fruit every month, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

Here the stream of our life is often so tainted with many noxious things, that we can hardly recognize it as having proceeded from the all-holy Fountain ; and as we look on these small, polluted streams, exhaling unwholesome vapours, we wonder if they can do any good to beast or even to herb ; and it seems impossible to us that they should ever be purified. But the angel shews us the water of life *pure*. How great a change must there be made in those other waters ! How glorious a change *will* be made when *all* the waters of life shall be gathered into that large river !

The waters of life are here often very turbid ; we cannot see clearly through them ; we are not sure whether it is our vision which is imperfect,—beclouded with mists of self-love, of evil passions,—or whether the water itself has so mixed with the clay of the valley that it cannot be separated from it. Let us patiently endure its dulness for the short time we are *here*, for *there* it will be clear as crystal, reflecting, with dazzling lustre, all the glorious objects in the heavenly city through which it flows.

Whence is this blessed river of the water of life ? The angel shows it to us “proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” *Therefore* is it so large, so pure, so clear. Nothing that is limited can proceed from infinity ;

nothing that is impure can come forth from perfect purity ; nothing that is dark can emanate from the Fountain of light.

We see here but in part ; we understand but in part. When the perfect is come, this partial seeing, this partial knowing will be done away ; that which is now only the vision of faith, will be a glorious reality.

* * *

DESCEND, my spirit ! Rest in humble peace
Where His kind hand hath placed thee, who best knows
Thy mortal frame, remembering thou art dust.
There faith shall whisper thee sweet words of trust,
That if thou steadfast predest on the way
Of thy high calling ; thy affections rise
To things above, nor centre here below ;—
If, while thou minglest with the cares of life,
Thou doest all to gain thy Father's love ;—
If, living in the world, mixing with men,
Thou treadest not in their unholy ways ;—
Then shalt thou share a joy which human heart
Cannot conceive ; then an immortal crown
Shall circle brows which here would dazzled shrink
From its pure brightness. As poor blighted flowers,
Or as the winter rose that scarce unfolds
Its sickly leaves to catch the mid-day sun,
Our feeble spirits sink before the blast,
Nor dare to imbibe the strong meridian rays ;
But *there* the mortal seeds, in weakness sown,
Shall rise in power and glory, heirs with Christ,
Glorious partakers with the sons of God !

PRAYER,

WE bless Thee, O Father, that Thou dost sometimes give us the visions of glory to help us through the vale. When we descend from the holy mount where they have shone around us, to continue our pilgrimage below, grant that their light may still be about us ; and that we may go rejoicing on the way Thou hast pointed out for us. We thank Thee, and we would take courage from these manifestations of Thy love. During the anxieties and doubts of the week that has now begun to us, we would remember the holy thoughts of this day of heavenly contemplation. And oh ! grant that our hearts may be so filled with images of glory, and purposes of duty, that

sinful desires shall find no entrance there. May the homes of our souls be well furnished with the treasures of the divine life. May no empty places in our affections tempt our bosom foes to assert their old dominion. But, bearing our treasures and our heaven about with us ; abounding always in the work of the Lord ; thinking on whatever is pure and lovely ; subduing, through the strength of Thy Holy Spirit, every earthly and debasing purpose ; resolutely choosing the good part which can never be taken away from us ; may we proceed from strength to strength, until each one of us appear perfect before Thee in Zion. Unite us, and all dear to us, we pray Thee, in the bonds of Thine eternal love : through Jesus Christ, our beloved Saviour. Amen.

MONDAY MORNING.

I THESS. v. 17.—*Pray without ceasing.*

WHAT is prayer ? Have we thought that the use of certain forms is necessary to it ? Have we deemed it requisite in order to pray, that we should either join with others, or retire into some secret place to open our hearts to God ? Have we supposed that prayer could be performed only at fixed seasons, or when the heart is in a peculiar state of excitement ? All these circumstances may be, and often are, highly favourable to devotion. But if we think them necessary, our views of the duty are too narrow. Prayer is far less the use of certain language, than the exercise of certain dispositions and affections ; and the great design of the *expression* of prayer is, to strengthen the dispositions and affections in which it peculiarly consists. The design of *forms of prayer* is, to secure us against inconsistency and impropriety, either in the sentiments or the expressions of devotion. The purpose of *social worship*, is, peculiarly, to unite our social with our pious affections ; and, by the same act, to bind us at once more closely to each other and to God. The object of *secret prayer* is, the free expression to God of what we could not freely express with, or before, one another. And *seasons of prayer* are prescribed, because

the duty, for which we have no allotted time, is easily deferred from hour to hour, from day to day, till it is utterly forgotten. But if the dispositions and affections, in which prayer peculiarly consists, are felt to any considerable degree, it cannot be shut up within the limits of stated hours, and of particular forms and places of devotion; it cannot always wait till others are ready to join in it, nor be restrained by the forms from which, perhaps, it has derived the most important benefits. These dispositions and affections, where they have obtained an ascendancy, will often burst asunder the bonds by which our labours or cares or pleasures would confine them. They will rise to God under the pressure of circumstances and events, which would bear them down to the earth; and in proportion as they are exercised and cherished, will produce the most important effects on our characters, our habits, and our happiness. These momentary, but sincere references and expressions to God, are an accomplishment of the precept, "*pray without ceasing.*" And not only may we thus pray without neglecting any other duty; but in this habitual devotion is the most uniform and powerful excitement to fidelity in every obligation.

PRAYER is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear;
The upward glancing of an eye
When none but God is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air;
His watchword at the gates of death,—
He enters heaven by prayer.

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice
Returning from his ways;
While Angels in their songs rejoice,
And say, "Behold, he prays!"

The saints, in prayer, appear as one,
 In word, and deed, and mind ;
 When with the Father and the Son
 Sweet fellowship they find.

* * *

O thou, by whom we come to God,
 The Life, the Truth, the Way ;
 The path of prayer thyself hast trod,
 Lord, teach us how to pray !

PRAYER.

How shall we speak to Thee, O Thou God of purity and holiness ! to Thee, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity ; and we, who are of unclean lips and unholy thoughts ? Oh touch our hearts with Thy love. Lift us above our weakness and our sins. Make us of the number of those, whose transgression is covered ; of those happy ones, to whom Thou imputest not sin. Thou art all-powerful to save ; all-good to bless ; all-merciful to forgive ; all-beneficent to supply the wants of Thy creatures. Our bodily wants Thou meetest with rich abundance. And Thy Divine Spirit is over the hearts of all Thy children, to elevate and purify and bless ; to make them meet for Thy kingdom above. And Thou hast promised to withhold none of Thy gifts from those who call upon Thee out of a pure heart. O Father ! we know that we are sinful. We feel a cloud upon our souls, that tells us we have not been faithful to the high and the holy privilege of listening to Thy words and knowing Thy will. And yet,—we cannot live without Thee. With humble awe, with deep humility of heart and soul, we bow before Thee. Oh ! listen to our cry ! From the depths of our hearts it ascends to Thee for mercy, for help, for salvation. Oh, turn us not away. Pour forth Thy Spirit upon us ;—Thine own all-conquering Spirit, that tears the rocks and rends the mountains, and finds nothing too hard to resist its holy influences—but the wicked heart of man ! Make us willing captives to Thy truth. Make us to feel its power in our hearts ; raising us from a death of sin to a life of righteousness ; elevating our soul by the contemplation of things above ; conforming our will to Thine ; creating a clean heart, and renewing a right spirit within us. Lord ! we are Thine, though unworthy. As clay in the hands

of the potter, so are we in Thine, O God. Make us vessels meet for our Master's use. We lay ourselves in the dust before Thee. Subdue our proud and rebellious wills. Let sin have no more dominion over us : and songs of rejoicing shall for ever ascend to Thee from our redeemed and glorified spirits ; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, our Saviour. Amen.

MONDAY EVENING.

PHILIPPIANS IV. 7.—*The peace of God which passeth all understanding.*

THERE is a twofold peace. The first is negative. It is relief from disquiet and corroding care. It is repose after conflict and storms. But there is another and a higher peace to which this is but the prelude, a "peace of God which passeth all understanding," and properly called "the kingdom of heaven within us." This state is anything but negative ! It is the highest and most strenuous action of the soul ; but an entirely harmonious action, in which all our powers and affections are blended in a beautiful proportion, and sustain and perfect one another. It is more than silence after storms. It is a concord of all melodious sounds. Have we never known a season, when, in the fullest flow of thought and feeling, in the universal action of the soul, an inward calm, profound as midnight silence, yet bright as the still summer noon, full of joy, but unbroken by one throb of tumultuous passion, has been breathed through our spirit, and gives us a glimpse and presage of the serenity of a happier world ? Of this character is the peace of religion. It is a conscious harmony with God and the creation ; an alliance of love with all beings ; a sympathy with all that is pure and happy ; a surrender of every separate will and interest ; a participation of the spirit and life of the universe ; an entire concord of purpose with its Infinite Original. This is peace, and the true happiness of man.

WITH pains, and anxious cares, and griefs oppress,
 When shall the worn and weary spirit rest?
 Where shall the soul find peace, with sorrow riven?
 Oh tell me, tell me, what and where is heaven?

I send my thoughts above, around, below;
 Nor earth, nor air, nor men, the secret know;
 On earth no stable resting place I find,
 No spring of life to satisfy the mind.

The mind! how manifold, how deep its wants!
 It asks, obtains, and yet for more it pants;
 It pants, receives, and asks; and restless still,
 At earthly fountains hopes its springs to fill.

Father divine! this fatal power controul,
 Which to the senses binds the immortal soul;
 Oh break this bondage! Lord, I would be free,
 And in my soul would find my heaven in Thee.

My heaven in Thee! O God! no other heaven
 To the immortal mind can e'er be given:
 Oh let Thy kingdom then within me come,
 And, as above, so here, Thy will be done!

My heaven in Thee! O Father! let me find
 My heaven in Thee, my heaven within my mind:
 No more of heaven and bliss my soul despair,
 For where my God is found, my heaven is there!

PRAYER.

O most merciful Father! Before Thee would we bow down in homage. Thou alone art God, supreme and everlasting. In Thee do we put our trust. In our ignorance and feebleness we come to Thee, who knowest our want, and art more willing to give what we need than we are to ask it. We come not to ask that Thou wilt give us the wealth or pleasure of this world. We ask not that Thou wilt save us from the trials which it would be good for us to bear. Our heart's desire and prayer is, that we may be kept in the ways of truth and righteousness. May we study and practise what is right. May we grow in wisdom as we grow in age. May we learn the lessons of duty which Thou hast given us by Jesus Christ. May he be our teacher and pattern. We have done wrong; O God our Father, forgive us. May we try to do wrong no more, but keep consciences void of offence. Let not our lips be stained by falsehood, nor our hearts be inflamed by passion.

But may we form characters that shall fit us for usefulness here so long as we shall live, and for a blessed immortality hereafter. And Thine shall be all the praise for ever ; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

TUESDAY MORNING.

I JOHN V. 5.—*Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*

WHAT stronger testimony can be given to the power of this principle of faith in Christ? If it be sufficient to overcome the world, to give life through his name, to effect the Christian regeneration, and a spiritual union with God; to what purpose can it be insufficient; to what work unequal? If this faith be weak, what faith can be called strong?

And that faith in Christ does do this; that it strengthens the soul with such principles, and fills it with such resources that it does not need the world for its happiness, and is capable of resisting its allurements and its terrors, of rising superior to its sin and its misery, there are "clouds of witnesses." The apostles and martyrs who endured all things, and, in the midst of all, "sang praises unto God;" and humbler Christians, in the depths of poverty and distress, yet cheerful, content, and rejoicing; men injured, threatened, and persecuted, yet patient, serene, and uncomplaining, while they can appeal to Him who judges righteously; men lingering in painful sickness, cut off from the engagements of life, their prospects blasted, their hopes disappointed, their props torn away, yet not cast down nor dismayed; but finding, in the power of faith and heavenly hope, a compensation for their trials, and a victory over the world.

Equally complete is their triumph over spiritual evil. They walk amid the deceitful disguises and fatal ambushes of sin, unseduced and unharmed. Though the passions within ally themselves to the solicitations without, and war against their souls; though the constitution of their bodily frame, and the temper of their mind, the circumstances in which they are thrown, the company which they frequent, and the cares which occupy them, all combine to introduce

some disorder in their spirits,—to allure or surprise them to what is wrong, and array them, even against their wills, in disobedience to God ; yet, over this fearful combination, against which unassisted man might combat in vain, these men of faith triumph. “God hath given them the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Faith, where its dominion is established in the soul, acts, like some superior charm, to quell the inferior nature, and awe the rebellious passions to submission. It brings up to them the image of the glorious Master to whom they are bound ; of the holy God, who is watching, that He may judge them ; of the future world, whose inheritance depends on their purity ; and of all the misery and horrors which follow in the train of unsubjected passions and voluntary sin. These press upon their minds with united and intuitive operation ; and, with the spontaneous indignation of the patriarch, they put the temptation to flight with the cry, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?”

Have I acknowledged Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, so heartily, that he is really and habitually my master, and that his authority rules and controuls me in all things?—so that this faith works by love, purifies my heart, and overcomes the world. Is it in me the parent of holy desires, pure dispositions, good living, and earnest aspirations after the excellence and the bliss of heaven? It is for these qualities that faith is valuable. It is by these that it works out our salvation. It is this efficacy in reforming, purifying, elevating, spiritualizing the human character, that constitutes the glory of the gospel. When it has done this, it has accomplished its great work. If it be doing this for me, I may be satisfied that it is neither fatally erroneous, nor weak. But if it be pure as that of angels, and yet do not display this moral power, it is no better than “sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal.”

THOU, who did stoop below
To drain the cup of woe,
Wearing the form of frail mortality ;
Thy blessed labours done,
Thy crown of victory won,
Hast passed from earth,—passed to thy home on high.

Man may no longer trace
 In thy celestial face
 The image of the bright, the viewless one ;
 Nor may thy servants hear,
 Save with faith's raptur'd ear,
 Thy voice of tenderness, God's holy Son !

Our eyes behold thee not,
 Yet hast thou not forgot
 Those who have placed their hope, their trust, in thee ;
 Before thy Father's face
 Thou hast prepared a place,
 That where thou art, there they may also be.

It was no path of flowers,
 Through this dark world of ours,
 Beloved of the Father, thou didst tread ;
 And shall we, in dismay,
 Shrink from the narrow way,
 When clouds and darkness are around it spread ?

O thou, who art our life,
 Be with us through the strife !
 Was not thy head by earth's fierce tempests bowed ?
 Raise thou our eyes above,
 To see a Father's love
 Beam, like a bow of promise, through the cloud.

E'en through the awful gloom
 Which hovers o'er the tomb,
 That light of love our guiding star shall be :
 Our spirits shall not dread
 The shadowy way to tread,
 Friend, Guardian, Saviour, which doth lead to thee.

PRAYER.

O OUR God and Father, in whose sacred presence our soul bow down with deep awe and fear ; we turn to Thee ever, as our unfailing refuge, when earthly comforts die. In these hours of the soul's prostration ; when the deep-dyed sinfulness of our hearts shows its fearful hues ; when we sigh for repose of conscience, and find it not ; we confess our sins with shame and sorrow, and ask, in all earnestness and sincerity, for Thy forgiveness. Lord ! let us not ask in vain. Without the renewing influences of Thy divine Spirit, all our good resolutions become weak ; our clear perceptions of sin are darkened ; our memories of Thy past mercies are forgotten ; the world and the flesh obtain dominion over us ; and we sink in the

abysses of guilt and error. Oh, save us, save us from this wretched lot. In Thy light only can we see light. Thou hast revealed Thyself to us through Thy Son, that we should no more walk in darkness, but should have the light of life abiding within us. Without this, O God, our hearts grovel in selfishness ; the old man, with its deceitful lusts, reigns over us ; and the fruit of our lives is unto the death of our souls. Create in us, we beseech Thee, that new man, which is renewed in knowledge after Thine own image ; whose fruit is holiness ; whose end is everlasting life. Hear us, O Lord, and make us wholly Thine : through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

TUESDAY EVENING.

JOHN IV. 14.—*Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life.*

THE holy Jesus asked water of the woman,—unsatisfying water ; but promised that himself, to them that ask it, would give waters of life, and satisfaction infinite ; so distinguishing the pleasures and appetites of this world from the desires and complacencies spiritual. Here we labour, but receive no benefit ; we sow many times, and reap not ; or reap and do not gather in ; we gather in and do not possess ; or possess but do not enjoy ; or, if we enjoy, we are still unsatisfied,—it is with anguish of spirit, and circumstances of vexation. A great heap of riches makes neither our clothes warm, nor our meat more nutritive, nor our beverage more pleasant ; it feeds the eye, but never fills it ; but, like drink to a dropsical person, increases the thirst and promotes the torment. But the grace of God, though but like a grain of mustard seed, fills up the furrows of the heart ; and, as the capacity increases, itself grows up in equal degrees, and never suffers any emptiness or dissatisfaction ; but carries content and fulness all the way ; and the degrees of augmentation are not steps and near approaches to satisfaction, but increasings of the capacity. The soul is satisfied all the way, and receives more ; not because it wanted anything,

but that it can hold more,—is more receptive of felicities. And, in every minute of sanctification, there is so excellent a condition of joy and high satisfaction, that the very calamities, the afflictions and persecutions of the world, are turned into felicities by the activity of the prevailing ingredient ; for now that all passionate desires are dead, and there is nothing remaining that is vexatious ; the peace, the serenity, the quiet sleeps, the evenness of spirit and contempt of things below, remove the soul from all neighbourhood of displeasure, and place it at the foot of the throne, whither, when it is ascended, it is possessed of felicities eternal. These were the waters which were given us to drink, when, with the rod of God, the rock, Jesus Christ, was smitten. The Spirit of God moves for ever upon these waters ; and when the angel of the covenant hath stirred the pool, whoever descends hither shall find health and peace, joys spiritual, and the satisfactions of eternity.

FOUNTAIN of life and living breath,
 Whose mercies never fail nor fade !
 Fill me with life that hath no death,
 Fill me with light that hath no shade ;
 Appoint the remnant of my days
 To see Thy power and sing Thy praise.

Lord God of gods, before whose throne
 Stand storms and fire ! Oh what shall we
 Return to heaven, that is our own,
 When all the world belongs to Thee ?
 We have no offerings to impart
 But praises, and a wounded heart.

Great God ! whose kingdom hath no end ;
 Into whose secrets none can dive ;
 Whose mercy none can apprehend ;
 Whose justice none can feel and live !
 What my dull heart cannot aspire
 To know, Lord, teach me to admire.

PRAYER.

GREAT and glorious Lord our God ! Under the influence of the important truth that Thou hast a right to the religious homage of Thy dependant creatures, we would now present ourselves before Thee, to acknowledge Thee as the Author of every mercy, and to supplicate the continuance of Thy favour. At the close of another day, would we remember with grati-

tude that great goodness which has been displayed in its various comforts and enjoyments. Oh, teach us to grow in goodness, by a constant struggle with our faults and temper, and by constant prayer to Thee for help who alone givest the victory. Teach our hearts contented and humble submission to Thy will, though it seem to us hard to bear. Enable us, we beseech Thee, to fix our attention. Let us remember that our spiritual progress is greatly hindered by allowing the mind in prayer or religious meditation to run from one thing to another. Suffer us not to dwell too much on self; and let us put far from us every mean and unworthy feeling. Suffer us not to waste all our thoughts on trifles, nor to indulge an anxious spirit. Preserve in us a deep sense of our accountability to Thee for the manner in which we employ, not only every hour of our lives, but every faculty of our minds. Make us to feel the exceeding worth of our immortal souls. Make us feel that the salvation which we are exhorted to work out with fear and trembling, ought to be no light concern to us. Oh keep us from indifference to it. Keep us from habits of mind that would interfere with our attention. Suffer us not to waste our precious time in vain, frivolous and unprofitable pursuits. Guard us in our hours of serious business, and especially in those of our professed communings with Thee, against the intrusion of any thoughts that would be unseasonable. Guard us at all times from thoughts that have in them the least shadow of a sin against purity, charity, or piety. Cast down every imagination within us that exalteth itself against the knowledge of Thee; and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Hear us, we beseech Thee; and grant that there may be continually in our hearts, as well as now on our lips, glory to Thee, our God and Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

WEDNESDAY MORNING.

GEN. XVI. 13.—*Thou, God, seest me.*

AN habitual regard to God as the Disposer of events is essential to the comfort of life. A firm conviction, that whatever be our station in society, it is of God's appointment, and that whatever be our talents, He is the giver

of them, will be found no less essential to the due exercise and improvement of the various powers conferred upon us. Under its influence, we shall be preserved from all false and misleading views of the nature and end of human life, and of the value of the objects which solicit our regard : we shall gain clear conceptions of what we are required to do, in order to answer the design for which we were sent into the world ; and in the use and improvement of our opportunities and means of usefulness, we shall be inclined to diligence and perseverance. We cannot be idle when we know that we are in the presence of our great Master. We cannot presume to waste or to hide our talents, if we be under the habitual persuasion, that He who has assigned us our task marks every instance of negligence ; takes notice of every unprofitable hour we spend, and every useless pursuit in which we engage. Nor, on the other hand, if we be fully persuaded that our zeal and fidelity are not unobserved by His all-seeing eye, shall we be discouraged if they are not immediately rewarded, if our exertions be undervalued, apparently unsuccessful, or even requited with ingratitude. While we enjoy the unspeakable delight of an approving conscience, we shall be encouraged by the sure prospect of applause, more satisfying than our fellow mortals can give ; of a reward more durable than this world has to bestow. Our care will be to "occupy all our talents," and, for the rest, to refer ourselves to Him who judgeth righteously.

Whatever, then, may be the sphere in which we move ; in whatever measure wealth, or power, or understanding, or any other talent which may be employed for the good of others be dealt out to us ; whether our influence be extended or confined, our talents many or few, let us carefully remember, that, diligent or slothful, persevering or inconstant, we are "ever in our great Task-Master's eye."

SPEAK with us, Lord, Thyself reveal,
While here on earth we rove ;
Speak to our hearts, and let us feel
The kindling of Thy love.

With Thee conversing, we forget
All time, and toil, and care ;
Labour is rest, and pain is sweet,
If Thou, my God, art here.

Here then, my God, vouchsafe to stay,
 And bid my heart rejoice :
 My bounding heart shall own Thy sway,
 And echo to Thy voice.

Thou callest me to seek Thy face !
 'Tis all I wish to seek ;
 To attend the whispers of Thy grace,
 And hear Thee inly speak.

Let this my every hour employ,
 Till I Thy glory see ;
 Enter into my Master's joy
 And find my heaven in Thee.

PRAYER.

O God, make us to cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils ; for wherein is he to be accounted of ? Oh turn our fear of men's faces into love of their souls. Let us esteem them as our fellow-servants in Thy work, and fellow-travelers to our long home. And where we cannot promote their duty and happiness, grant, O Lord, that they may not hinder ours ; and that, when we are not edified, we may not be corrupted by them. O God ! may we remember that Thou seest us. May Thy presence ever sway us more than the presence of men ; let us account it a small thing to be judged of them ; and, instead of being determined by their way or humour, let us regard our own conscience more than their opinion ; and do all in Thy sight, heartily as unto Thee. Let it not be our aim to ingratiate ourselves with men, but to please the great Judge of all. Yet keep Thy servants, O Lord, from giving scandal and offence to any ; that we may not, by pride and passion, by vanity and indiscretion, or by moroseness and uncharitableness, dishonour our profession, or make the way of truth be evil spoken of. But help us, O our God and Guide, to walk circumspectly ; and to speak and act, with due consideration of all times and places, persons and circumstances. Enable us to behave ourselves wisely, and to guide our affairs with discretion : and so to go in and out among our fellow-creatures upon earth, as to preserve our integrity in Thy sight, and have our conversation in heaven, and still enjoy friendship with Thee and with Thy dear Son, our only Lord and Saviour. Amen.

WEDNESDAY EVENING.

HEBREWS XII. 9. * * *The Father of spirits.* * *

WHAT thoughts of love and tenderness are wakened by the name of *father* ! He was my guardian and support in childhood ; he sympathizes in all my joys and sorrows ; I can fly to him in all my troubles with the certainty that his arms are ever open to receive me. If I have gone astray, he rebukes me ; but the sorrow in his tone and manner shows how deeply he is wounded, and this touches my heart more than any punishment.

Is that beloved parent gone to his eternal dwelling ? I feel that now, as ever, where he is, is my *home* ;—I have no abiding rest but there. All that I most treasure is associated with the thought of him ;—most of it I have had directly from him.

If such are some of my thoughts and feelings towards my earthly father—now no longer of earth and sharing the weakness of mortality, but next to be known personally to me as of heaven, heavenly,—what should be those I entertain towards the Father of my immortal spirit ?

Christ only can lead us to the “*Father of spirits* ;” and, through him, the sure word of revelation has declared to us that all that is most beautiful and good in the earthly relationship exists in perfection in the heavenly one. I feel that every thing I truly enjoy is spiritual. Let me, then, thank the Father of my spirit for it. I constantly want aid and guidance and correction and chastisement ; the Father of my spirit will bestow it with all the tenderness of my earthly parent, and with unbounded wisdom. And if my joys and sorrows are such that I do not hesitate to tell them to Him, I shall feel them heightened, not indeed by human sympathy, precious as it is, but by their being blended with infinite love and perfection, by their being under the smile of the Father of spirits.

Yet, do I hold daily and hourly communion with Him ? Do I freely pour out my soul to Him ? Do I tell Him my joys, and fly to Him in my sorrows ? Do I remember that, being the child of His immortal Spirit, I should walk in the

spirit! Heavenly Father! Thou only knowest! search me and try my ways! chasten me in Thy love as Thine own son, that I may be partaker of Thy holiness.

O my Father, may I seek only Thee, and to do Thy will; so may my Heaven begin here, before Thou callest me to Thy more immediate presence above!

Is there a lone and dreary hour,
When worldly comforts lose their power?
My Father! let me turn to Thee,
And set each thought of darkness free.

Is there a time of fear or grief,
Which sees no prospect of relief?
My Father! break the cheerless gloom;
And bid my heart its calm resume.

Is there an hour of peace and joy,
When hope is all my soul's employ?
My Father! still my hopes will roam,
Until they rest with Thee, *their home*.

The noon-tide blaze, the midnight scene,
The dawn, or twilight's sweet serene;
The sick, nay, e'en the dying hour,
Shall own my Father's grace and power.

PRAYER.

BLESSED, for ever blessed, be Thy name, O God, for the glorious immortality which Thou hast made known unto us by Thy Son Jesus, our Saviour. Oh, teach us so to live in this world, that we may be prepared for its purity and bliss, when Thou seest fit to call us hence. Fill our hearts with an increasing desire to know and to do Thy will; so that, the more we know, the more we may desire to know of Thee, and so go on increasing in knowledge and love. And may the Spirit of Thy Son shine more and more within us unto the perfect day. May we ever bear in mind, when we come unto Thee, that Thou knowest us better than we know ourselves. Thou knowest the longings of our hearts, the motives of our actions. Thou knowest whether we are anxious to take up our cross, and follow Christ. O God, we cannot deceive Thee, We submit ourselves wholly to the guidance of Thy Spirit. May we ever take our Saviour for our pattern; and, like him, be humble, submissive, gentle, kind, determined to obey Thee

even though we should be persecuted unto death. Blessed be Thy name for sending him unto the world, that through him we might obtain everlasting life. Oh, strengthen our faith; remove our doubts, that we may go on steadily and firmly in the path which he has trod; so that at the last, having done the work which Thou gavest us to do, like him we may say, "Father into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Amen.

THURSDAY MORNING.

JOHN XI. 36.—*Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!*

LET me, then, "see how Jesus loved,"—what was the manner in which the kind affections were manifested in him. The hours when our Lord was alone with his disciples, or the family at Bethany, are those in which we can most clearly trace the principles by which he was guided in his feelings and conduct in private life, and the manner of their operation. Nothing in those hours of social intercourse is so striking as our Lord's habitual patient forbearance and self-restraint. The "twelve" had shown, by leaving their employments to follow him, such piety and sincerity of purpose, as had, with their attachment to his person, won his regard; but these good points in their character were united with no small degree of ignorance, prejudice, and ambition. There is scarcely one of these friendly interviews, in which *we* do not find them giving him occasion for this forbearance; and the superior delicacy of our Saviour's perception of right must have made them still more trying to him; yet his meek affection was equal to the demands upon it. It operated also to prevent him from giving them present pleasure, or saving them from present pain, of a *worldly* nature. The disciples were not gratified with a miraculous gift of two hundred denarii to buy food for the fainting crowds, though they were made happy by the honourable employment of distributing the ample yet frugal meal. Lazarus was not saved from sickness and dissolution, nor his sisters from sorrow, though he was eventually restored to their embraces and to life. His love to his mother was not permitted to detain him from public

life, when the Spirit of Jehovah called him out to preach glad tidings ; though, before that time, his filial submission drew him instantly from the interesting conversation in the Temple, and prompted him to continue for many years in subjection to his parents.

Thus was every feeling, word and action of our Lord, founded on love to God, producing conformity to His will ; —it was the pure affection of a sanctified spirit for an infinitely Holy Being. And this love to God at once gave him the direction, and determined the intensity of his love to his fellow mortals. His love to man was stronger than death, but not stronger than duty ; it was equally tender and forbearing, unselfish and untiring ; and *thus* it was *he* loved.

Here, then, is *my* pattern, in its principle, its direction and degree. Let me look into the state of my kind affections, and see how far they accord with those of Jesus ; for this self-knowledge will be requisite. Let me aim at a nearer resemblance to Him in these respects ; but for that, there must be self-government. Let me endeavour to know the extent of my deficiencies,—this will demand both humility and courage. Let me open my mind to an extensive survey of the various instances of kindness I have received in looks and manner, as well as in words and action,—this will call forth my grateful and earnest endeavour to return them. Let me not however, imagine that I can maintain and exercise those affections perfectly, if they are not habitually directed to Him who is most worthy of all created beings to be loved,—the “Man Christ Jesus.”

Yes, my dear Saviour must I love
Who first the generous feeling knew.

His piety and purity will refine my affections ! his wisdom and truth and benevolence will chasten and direct my active endeavours to increase the happiness, and to bear and submit to the weakness and errors, of those I love.

“See how he loved !” exclaimed the Jews,
When Jesus o’er his Lazarus wept ;
My grateful heart the words shall use,
While on his life my eye is kept.

See how he loved, who traveled on,
Teaching the doctrine from the skies ;

Who bade disease and pain be gone,
And called the sleeping dead to rise.
See how he loved, who, firm yet mild,
Patient endured the scoffing tongue ;
Who, oft provoked, yet ne'er reviled,
Nor did his greatest foe a wrong.
See how he loved, who never shrank
From toil or danger, pain or death ;
Who all the cup of sorrow drank,
And meekly yielded up his breath.
See how he loved, who died for man ;
Who laboured thus, and thus endured,
To finish the all-gracious plan,
Which life and heaven to man secured.
And shall such love not meet return ?
Not prompt the conduct, move the breast ?
Shall not my grateful bosom burn,
To prove my love by every test ?
Yes ! my dear Saviour will I love,
Who every generous feeling knew ;
His faithful follower ever prove,
And keep his pattern still in view.

PRAYER.

O God, our Heavenly Father, how great have been the offers of Thy mercy unto the children of men by Thy Son Jesus Christ. May we not receive the grace of God in vain. Thou Thyself hast deigned to beseech us ; Christ hath died for us. Shall his example and sufferings, and Thy invitations, O God, be unheeded by us ? Oh quicken our hearts with thankfulness, love, and devoted zeal ; and enable us to offer up ourselves body and soul to Thee, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. May we be his true followers. He hath said " Whosoever will be my disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." And is any cross of ours equal to the cross of Christ ? Shall our love of Christ be so feeble an emotion that it will encounter no difficulty, that it will make no sacrifice ? Oh let us never shrink from a faithful allegiance unto our blessed Saviour. Hath he not promised all needful help to those who seek it in faith ? Shall we not be enabled to bear and do all things in his spirit ? And have we not the blessed assurance that nothing shall ever separate us from Thy love to us in Christ Jesus ? May we feel that this world is not our portion ;—that it must not have

our hearts. May all we possess,—our time, our thoughts, our énergies, our worldly means, be consecrated entirely unto Thee our God ; and may we with Thy gracious help, go on from strength to strength, from glory to glory, till mortality is swallowed up of life ; through him that died, and rose again, and that sitteth at Thy right hand for evermore. Amen.

THURSDAY EVENING.

JOB XIV. 1.—*Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.*

THEN moderate thy desires and chasten thine affections, and reckon not on a long life exempted from evil. Summon all thy courage, fortitude, and patience. Arm thyself with the virtues of a good man. Keep thy heart and conscience pure, so that, whatever trouble there is without, there may be joy within ; and though thou art in the midst of storms and tempests, a sweet calm may reign in thy bosom. If thou walkest with God uprightly, thou wilt walk surely. It will be thy shield and great reward.

Murmuring will not dispel thy doubts ; repining will not ease thy trouble ; impatience will not mitigate thy pain ; and to fear death will not retard its coming, nor diminish its sorrows.

Are thy days few ? Then wait and endure patiently till the end come. Waste not thy precious time. Are thy days full of trouble ? Be reconciled then to the thought of dying ; but first prepare to die the death of the righteous. Short as is thy stay here, it is long enough, if thou art faithful, for all the duties and work required of thee ; and full of trouble as is human life, there is in the gospel opened to thee an unfailing source of relief, and of joy. Hast thou ever repaired to this source ? If thou hast not, let me expostulate with thee. Why all these expressions and signs of sorrow, if thou art not desirous of comfort ? And if thou wouldest be comforted, why dost thou turn a deaf ear to the soothing voice of him who invites thee to come to him and be happy ? Thou art informed, and thou hast found it so, that in the world there is tribulation : why wilt thou

still cling to it, and neglect him in whom thou mightest have peace, and also a faith which would enable thee to overcome the world?

I WOULD not live always ; I ask not to stay
Where storm after storm rises dark o'er the way.
I would not live always ; no, welcome the tomb !
Since Jesus has lain there, I dread not its gloom.

Who, who would live always ? away from his God,
Away from yon heaven, that blissful abode,
Where rivers of pleasure flow o'er the bright plains,
And the noon-tide of glory eternally reigns ?

Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet,
Their friends and their kindred transported to greet ;
Where the streams of their rapture unceasingly roll,
And the smile of the Lord is the peace of the soul ?

PRAYER.

LORD and Father ! In Thee only is the fountain of life. In Thy presence alone trouble passes away, and afflictions become sweet. We would not desire to find joy apart from Thee, nor peace in following our own ways. Thou hast declared that the wages of sin is death, and we feel that it is so. When we repine and are fretful, we know that our hearts love not Thee in Thy dealings. Father ! give us life in Thy light and love. May eternal life abide within us ; so that sorrow and discontent and evil desires and all perishable things shall be swallowed up in the intensity of our spiritual affections, and shall give place to heavenly purposes and hopes. And in the times of deep affliction, when the flesh is weak through manifold trials, and the heavy hand of suffering is laid upon us, and the burden of past remembrance adds bitterness to our gloom ; then, O Father, be Thou especially near us to deliver us from our wickedness, and to save us through the mighty power of Thy spiritual strength. Thus be Thou our support, so long as Thou hast work of active or patient service for us, in this imperfect being : and when Thou hast done with us here, and callest us to the unseen world, may we not feel that we are losing that which has hitherto been our life, but that we are finding that which before we had enjoyed in part only ;—even Thy perfect love, O Father, in the eternal kingdom of Thy blessed Son, our Redeemer. Amen.

FRIDAY MORNING.

II COR. v. 7.—*For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

“WE walk by faith,” says the apostle, and “not by sight.” We are guided by the things eternal, rather than by the things temporal. We pursue the realities, rather than the shadows. We fasten our hold on that which is permanent, rather than on that which our sight itself may tell us is passing away. In the concerns of our souls, we regard the Author of our souls, and not the enemies of our souls. We strive to conform our conduct to the commandments of God, rather than to the custom of the time. We keep our hearts fixed on the world which is to come, and the glories which will be revealed, rather than on the present world, which soon will be no more, and its objects, which will soon vanish from our eyes. This is the declaration of St. Paul; and the way which he adopts and announces, is the only true, and rational, and living way. The Christian has far more reason, more evidence, and better authority for walking by faith, in the path of conduct, and the regulation of life, than they who question or wonder at him can have for walking by sight. In his turn, he may question and wonder at them. Why, he may ask, do you walk by sight? Why, formed to look upward, are you continually bending your spirit towards earth? Why do you confine your hope, that divine and soaring faculty, to fleeting objects, which perish while you pursue them? Why do you bind your affections so tightly to things, which, though visible, are visibly withering; and which, even if they should remain, cannot follow you, cannot be taken with you out of the world? Why do you look for your friends among the dead, as if the clods of the valley could bury goodness, or hide and cover sin? Are you yourselves going nowhere but to the grave, which necessarily bounds and terminates every earthly prospect? Alas! that all your sight, that all your evidence, should be shut up there; should end by conducting you there! Is there no God, no Christ, no resurrection, no immortality? Is the short life of sense more worthy than the eternal life of the soul? Oh! why do you walk by sight?

Do I walk by faith? Do I walk as if there were other things in existence besides what I see, and of far more glory and desireableness than what I behold with my mortal sight? Do I walk as if Christ had risen from the dead and revealed another world to my soul, in comparison with which this world is nothing; but in preparation for which this world is everything? Let me ponder with myself that question. And let me remember that the question is not, whether I merely believe in God, in Christ, in the unseen and spiritual world; but whether I mould my dispositions, my purposes, my actions, after the image of that belief; not merely whether I *have* faith, but more especially whether I *walk* by faith; whether, believing in God, I walk in the way of His commandments; whether, believing in Christ, I walk as he walked, in benevolence, self-denial, and piety: whether, believing in his resurrection, I acknowledge its power, and rise from sin, and set my affections on things above.

GIVE to the winds thy fears;
 Hope, and be undismayed;
 God hears thy sighs, and counts thy tears,
 God shall lift up thy head.
 Through waves, through clouds and storms,
 He gently clears thy way:
 Wait thou his time; so shall the night
 Soon end in joyous day.

He every where hath sway,
 And all things serve His might;
 His every act pure blessing is;
 His paths unsullied light.
 When He makes bare his arm,
 What shall His work withstand?
 When He His people's cause defends,
 Who, who shall stay His hand?

Leave to His sovereign sway,
 To choose and to command;
 With wonder filled, thou then shalt own
 How wise, how strong His hand.
 Thou comprehend'st Him not:
 Yet earth and heaven tell—
 God sits as sovereign on the throne;
 He ruleth all things well.

Thou see'st our weakness, Lord !
 Our hearts are known to Thee ;
 Oh lift Thou up the sinking hand,
 Confirm the feeble knee !
 Let me, in life and death,
 Boldly Thy truth declare ;
 And publish, with my latest breath,
 Thy love, and guardian care.

PRAYER.

O GRACIOUS Father, keep us now through Thy Holy Spirit.—Keep our hearts soft and tender, now in health and in the midst of the bustle of the world ; keep the thought of Thyself present to us, as our Father in Jesus Christ. And keep alive in us a spirit of love and meekness to all men, that we may be at once gentle and active and firm. Oh strengthen us to bear pain or sickness, or danger, or whatever Thou shalt be pleased to lay upon us as Christ's soldiers and servants ; and let our faith overcome the world daily. Strengthen our faith that we may be able to realize to our minds the things after death, and Thyself. Oh save us from our sins, and from ourselves ; and keep us ever Thine through Jesus Christ. Hear our prayers, O Lord, for our dear relations, our kind friends, our household, and for all committed to our care. Perfect and bless the work of thy Spirit in the hearts of Thy people, and may Thy kingdom come ; and Thy will be done in earth as in Heaven. We pray for this and for all Thou seest that we need, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FRIDAY EVENING.

JEREMIAH XXXI. 18.—*Turn thou me, and I shall be turned.*

IS this truly and earnestly my prayer ? Do I sincerely desire to be turned ? Do I feel my own inability, unaided, to work the great change of heart which God requires, which my own soul longs after ? O Father, Thou knowest.

I continually feel my own weakness, and I know that this weakness in great part arises from not resting firmly and constantly on my Father's arm, from not being girt with the armour of faith. Do I pray from my *inmost soul*, "Out of

weakness make me strong?" I have daily and humiliating proofs of the evil that is in me. I see my best resolves, my highest aspirations stifled by unholy passions; my purest actions sullied by self-seeking. Is my sincere and earnest supplication, "Give me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me?"

He ever heareth prayer; faint and lowly though it be. He will give it an answer of peace, though it may be very different from that which we should, in our ignorance, have desired. But He does send it; let me receive it humbly and thankfully as a token of His love; let me be ready to be turned, when, in answer to my prayer, He turns me. Perhaps the messenger He sends to call my wandering heart back to Himself is in a form in which I scarcely recognize it as such. It may be the loss of property, of worldly consideration; shall I harden my heart against it, and receive it with stoical indifference? Oh rather let me humbly listen to its voice, warning me to set my affections on things above, not on things below, and meekly suffer myself to be turned to whatever God would have me to be. Perhaps friends have proved faithless, and instead of filling my cup of life with sweetness, have embittered it with heart-burnings, with unjust suspicions. This too is from God, who thus warns me to centre my highest trust and love in Him alone. Or my schemes of usefulness have failed, as it seems, through the perverseness and ill-will of those who should have been foremost to aid them. Even this is an answer to my prayer; God would so teach me to be a more humble labourer in His vineyard,—to sow and plant diligently, and leave it to Him to give the increase in His own good time. It may be that God visits me with a grievous sickness; the burden of the flesh becomes very heavy, and, without the sure faith that it comes from my Father, I might desire for myself that I should die. Let me even now, in my sorest agony, thank my God that He is thus turning me. It is thus that He breaks my proud spirit; it is thus that He opens my soul to the tender influence of love; thus does He make me feel the nothingness of all but Him; thus does He turn me to Himself.

O my Father! my prayers are very weak; my best resolves are but as the morning dew, which soon passeth away.

Quicken Thou me with Thy Spirit ; answer my prayers not after my own erring desires, but after Thy own perfect wisdom and love, and finally receive me to Thyself, to be one with Thee !

FROM the recesses of a lowly spirit
My humble prayer ascends—O Father ! hear it !
Upsoaring, on the wings of fear and meekness,
Forgive its weakness.

I know, I feel, how mean and how unworthy
The trembling sacrifice I pour before Thee ;
What can I offer in Thy presence holy,
But sin and folly ?

For in Thy sight, who every bosom viewest,
Cold are our warmest vows, and vain our truest ;
Thoughts of a hurrying hour ; our lips repeat them,
Our hearts forget them.

We see Thy hand—it leads us, it supports us ;
We hear Thy voice—it counsels and it courts us ;
And, then we turn away—and still Thy kindness
Pardons our blindness.

And still Thy rain descends, Thy sun is glowing ;
Fruits ripen round, flowers are beneath us blowing,
And, as if man were some deserving creature,
Joys cover nature.

Oh how long suffering, Lord ! but Thou delightest
To win with love the wandering. Thou invitest
By smiles of mercy,—not by frowns or terrors,
Man from his errors.

Who can resist Thy gentle call—appealing
To every generous thought, and grateful feeling ;—
That voice paternal—whispering, watching ever ?—
My bosom ?—Never.

Father and Saviour ! plant within this bosom,
These seeds of holiness : and bid them blossom,
In fragrance and in beauty bright and vernal,
And spring eternal.

Then place them in those everlasting gardens,
Where angels walk, and seraphs are the wardens ;
Where every flower that creeps through death's dark portal
Becomes immortal.

PRAYER.

FATHER of mercies, who graciously bestoweth Thy Holy Spirit on such as seek it in sincerity and truth ; grant that

we may come before Thee at this time in a right frame of mind ; and do Thou help us effectually against our sins and infirmities. O heavenly Father, leave us not, we pray Thee, to ourselves ; but be pleased yet to move us to the love and obedience of whatever Thou dost command. Thou knowest, Searcher of hearts, how we fear and distrust ourselves. Oh bring us, through Christ our Redeemer, unto Thyself, by whatever means Thou shalt deem best ; that we may yield ourselves entirely to the influence of Thy Holy Spirit. Make us earnest and faithful, that we may do our part in the great work of the soul's salvation. May we not shrink from whatever Thou shalt require at our hands. Oh deign to remove from us this weakness, this indecision, this want of faith ; and grant that we may serve Thee with entire love and trust and devotedness to duty. We would love Thee, our God and Father, with *all* our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength. Oh may we love Thy Son, our Saviour, and his blessed work : and may we prefer him and his cross, before all that this world can offer. Breathe, O God, the spirit of holiness into our spirits, and make us truly and solely devoted unto Thee. Let us through Christ be Thine in every purpose of our souls ; Thine in all our thoughts, and plans ; thine in all our labours for ourselves or for others ; Thine in our intercourse with our family, our friends, and the world ; Thine in every joy, in every sorrow ; Thine in all the changes of life, in the hour of death, and in eternity. Amen.

SATURDAY MORNING.

MARK X. 50.—*And he, casting away his garment, rose and came to Jesus.*

JESUS called the blind Bartimæus. He hesitated not one moment ; he threw away every incumbrance ; he rose from the posture of hopeless indolence ; and hastened to him who was strong to save. Has Jesus never called *us* ? When, indeed, has he *not* called us ? He calls us to our prayers,—“Seek, and ye shall find,—ask the Father in my name.” He calls us to his feast,—“This do in remembrance of me.”

Yet are we even willing to approach? We are sitting: if he would come to us we might receive him; but we will not rise, still less will we cast away our garments; and any mantle of pride, any habit of indolence, is enough to keep us from him. The blind man was ready to come when Christ called, because he had been very forward in calling on Christ. He knew his need, and welcomed his physician.

As for us, instead of calling loudly on Christ, by summoning to our aid the blessed promises of his word, we suffer him to call loudly on us. We allow conscience, time after time, to repeat to us the invitations of the Gospel, and all in vain. We rebuke it; we bid it hold its peace;* and here we are, still blind, still sitting on the ground; and Christ, meanwhile, having long invited us, is leaving us. One warning of Providence after another breaks, unheeded, on our ears. We turn ourselves in our mantle, and become deaf as well as blind!

LORD! we sit and cry to Thee,
 Like the blind beside the way;
 Make our darkened souls to see
 The glory of Thy perfect day;
 Lord! rebuke our sullen night,
 And give Thyself unto our sight.
 Lord! we do not ask to gaze
 On our dim and earthly sun;
 But the light that still shall blaze
 When every star its course hath run;
 The glory of Thy blest abode,
 The uncreated light of God.

PRAYER.

HAVE pity on us, O our Father! Thou greatest, most merciful of Beings! Thou, who art everywhere present, look on us as we sit by the way. Show us the path that Jesus hath trod, that we may rise and follow him unto Thee! Let us not frustrate Thy merciful designs by our own carelessness and ingratitude. Give us a just sense of our unworthiness, folly and guilt. What we know not, do Thou teach us; and whereinsoever we have done iniquity, or acted contrary to any of the laws of piety, truth, charity, purity, or sobriety, may we do so no more. Let no vain thoughts or corrupt imaginations, be harboured in our minds.

* Matthew xx. 31.

Let us not give way to any unruly passions, or inordinate affections. Let us set a watch at the door of our lips, that we offend not with our tongues.—Prepare us for all the occurrences of the day. Teach us to see and own Thy hand in every mercy and enjoyment. Or, if Thou sufferest any affliction to befall us, help us, by a wise improvement of Thy chastisement, to become partakers of Thy holiness. May we daily walk with Thee in a course of holy living, so as to approve ourselves in Thy sight. Guide us, and all ours, by Thy counsel through life ; and afterwards receive us to glory, through our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.

SATURDAY EVENING.

ROMANS XIII. 10.—*Love is the fulfilling of the law.*

LAW has no hold on our affections. It is an abstract principle, regulating our behaviour to one another. It makes an appeal to the mind for support ; and, if the mind had unbounded sway, law would be all powerful ; for what it commands would be perceived to be best, not only for those whom it appears particularly intended to protect, our neighbours, but also for ourselves. But man is swayed by self-love and by his feelings, as well as by his mind ; and these most commonly hold strong dominion over him. Hence, law is obliged to appeal to force to ensure obedience ; its present terrors compel obedience to the laws of man ; and its fears, though more remote, yet more awful, induce some degree of unwilling submission to the laws of God.

Man seldom delights in the law ; he escapes from it whenever he can ; and, while he obeys the letter, often neglects the spirit. He not unfrequently makes a cool calculation, whether the penalty of the law will be more than overbalanced by the pleasures of disobedience.

But let *love* fill the soul,—love of God and love of His creatures,—how is every thing altered ! Love which considers all around as other selves, will be as considerate of the welfare of others as of itself ; and a man will no more, by infringing a law, injure others, than he would willingly injure himself. He not only fulfills the law, with thankful-

ness that he has such a guide ; but he goes beyond it ; he anticipates its commands. Love cannot work ill to his neighbour ; the ends of law are already accomplished. And now, with respect to God, fear is no longer necessary to lead us to obey Him ; fear hath trembling, and we cannot tremble before one who loves us as God loves us, and who chastens us only in mercy. We seek to know His will more perfectly, that we may do it better ; and we love to do it, because it will unite us more to Him.

What gratitude is sufficient for us to feel to our Saviour, who hath brought us into the state of children, not servants ; who hath taught us to be bound to each other, and to our Father, in love ; who hath thus enabled us, even here, to have a foretaste of the perfect love and blessedness which eternal life will bring us ? “ This is the message we have heard of him, that God is light.” “ This is the promise he hath promised us, eternal life.”

Oh may love grow brighter and brighter in us unto the perfect day !

THEE will I love, my strength, my tower ;
Thee will I love, my joy, my crown ;
Thee will I love with all my power,
In all Thy works, and Thee alone ;
Thee will I love, till the pure fire
Fills my whole soul with chaste desire.

Ah ! why did I so late Thee know ;
Thee, lovelier than the sons of men ?
Ah ! why did I no sooner go
To Thee, the only ease in pain ?
Ashamed I sigh ; and inly mourn
That I so late to Thee did turn.

In darkness willingly I strayed !
I sought Thee, yet from Thee I roved ;
Far wide my wandering thoughts were spread ;
Thy creatures more than Thee I loved ;
And now, if more at length I see,
’Tis through Thy light, and comes from Thee.

I thank Thee, uncreated sun,
That Thy bright beams on me have shined
I thank Thee, who hast overthrown
My foes, and healed my wounded mind ;
I thank Thee, whose enlivening voice
Bids my freed heart in Thee rejoice.

Uphold me in the doubtful race,
Nor suffer me again to stray;
Strengthen my feet with steady pace,
Still to press forward in Thy way;
My soul and flesh, O Lord of might!
Replenish with Thy heavenly light.

Give to my eyes refreshing tears,
Give to my heart chaste, hallowed fires;
Give to my soul, with filial fears,
The love that all heaven's host inspires;
That all my powers, with all their might,
In Thy sole glory may unite.

Thee will I love, my joy, my crown;
Thee will I love, my Lord, my God;
Thee will I love, beneath Thy frown
Or smile, Thy sceptre or Thy rod:
What though my flesh and heart decay,
Thee shall I love in endless day!

PRAYER.

THOU, most tender Father, hast abundantly fulfilled all Thy promises to us. Thou hast been waiting to be gracious, and hast filled our scanty vessels with the sweet tokens of Thy presence. If we have not been satisfied, ours is the false want, that, in Thy love, Thou hast not seen fit to gratify. If we have not been holy, ours was the sin that chained us to ourselves, when Thou wouldest have had us walk with Thee and be perfect in following Thy will. Father, we have not loved Thee as we ought, and thus we have found Thy law burdensome to us. Oh burst the fetters of self-love, that have enchained our souls. May we embrace the new commandment of Thy Son with pure affection, and henceforth find the only delight of our lives in Thy loving service. To Thy never-ceasing care we commit ourselves this night. Watch over us in the helpless hours of sleep; and watch over us, when we need Thy help as much, in the wakeful hours of duty. And so guide us through the scenes of this lower state, that we may reach the heaven of purity and love in the eternal home; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Third Week.

SUNDAY MORNING.

HEBREWS XII. 2.—*Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith.*

O MY God, in whom I live and move, and have my being, what is the wisest use I can make of the present life? What road ought I to pursue, in order most safely to attain the end of my existence? How can I most successfully prepare for a more perfect and happy state after death? How different are the paths in which men walk! How opposite and contradictory are the maxims they follow! Nothing is more common than to see them wandering into forbidden paths, and failing of the end they have in view! I need a sure and safe rule which I may follow without danger, and an enlightend guide in whom I may entirely confide.

But where else shall I find either the one or the other unless in the heavenly doctrine of Thy Son Jesus Christ, and the example which he hath left us. Yes! he is the way, the truth and the life." Would to God I might become every day more like him.

The idea of Thee, his and our Heavenly Father, was the first and last thought that engaged his attention. To do Thy will with pleasure, to contribute to the execution of Thy benevolent purposes, to fulfil the work Thou gavest him to do,—this was his meat and drink; this constituted his happiness, and was the governing rule of his conduct. To be useful to mankind was his favourite and constant employment. Compassion, benevolence, and charity, followed him every where, and animated all his discourses.

The purest virtue, and the sublimest piety, were his faithful companions in solitude, and in the intercourses of life. Never did he prefer his own ease and personal advantage to the welfare of his brethren; never did he refuse his assistance to those who applied to him; never did he defer till the morrow the duties of the present day, and thus lose an opportunity of performing some good work; never did he suffer himself to be discouraged by the ingratitude of men, or by the abuse they made of his favours; never did he indulge the least complaint of a life so laborious, so sorrowful, and so entirely devoted to the salvation of the human race; never did he regret the time and labour he bestowed on his great work, even when his labours and good offices did not produce the effects which ought to have attended them. It was thus that he went about doing good, at all times, on all occasions, and to all men, to his enemies as well as his friends, in the most discouraging, as well as the most favourable circumstances. It was thus he passed the days of his short life, in the bosom of innocence, and in the exercise of virtue. All were consecrated to the glory of God, and the happiness of men; all were full of good works, and marked by virtuous endeavours; all promised him a rich and abundant harvest; and it was the remembrance of the good use he had made of them, which led him to say with a firm confidence, at the end of his course, "It is finished."

And such also, O my God, is the use I ought to make of my days. I ought to continue Thy work upon earth, and supply, in some measure, the place of my Lord and Master, in the midst of my brethren. His spirit should animate me, his conduct should be the pattern of mine. What a grand and important vocation! May I never lose sight of it, but run with resolution and constancy in the path which Jesus hath marked out, and by which he himself arrived at immortal happiness.

Yes, I will look unto Jesus, and follow his steps with cheerfulness and perseverance. I will think and live as he did, be guided by his precepts and example, and make my felicity and glory consist in becoming more and more like him.

HE knelt, the Saviour knelt and prayed,
 When but his Father's eye
 Looked through the lonely garden's shade
 On that dread agony :
 Messiah cried with suppliant breath,
 Bowed down with sorrow unto death.

He proved them all,—the doubt, the strife,
 The faint perplexing dread ;
 The mists that hang o'er parting life
 All gathered round his head ;
 And the Deliverer knelt to pray ;
 Yet passed it not, that cup, away !

It passed not, though the stormy wave
 Had sunk beneath his tread ;
 It passed not, though to him the grave
 Had yielded up its dead :
 But there was sent him from on high
 A gift of strength, for man to die !

And was the Sinless thus beset
 With anguish and dismay ?
 How may *we* meet our conflict yet,
 In the dark narrow way ?
 Through him, through him that path who trod,
 The child of grief,—the Son of God !

PRAYER.

FOR ever blessed be Thy name, O Father, for Thy unexampled love in sending forth Thy beloved Son into the world, that we might be formed to a life of holiness by the influence of his word and spirit. Suffer us not to neglect this great salvation ; but through a lively faith, may we effectually devote ourselves to him, in all the ways of holy obedience. May we learn of him to guard against the temptations which would divert us from a holy, benevolent and upright course ; or which would obstruct our progress in it.—Unknown and untried are many of the trials to which we are daily exposed : may we enter on this and on every day with pious fear. May no irregular working of our own thoughts, or the violence of appetite, disturb the peace, or defile the purity of our hearts. Let no secrecy betray us into any sin, for which our own reflections would reproach us ; and which Thou, who seest in secret, wilt condemn. May we ever act under a sense of Thy presence with us ; and be governed by an ardent desire of Thine approbation.

May we cast all our cares upon Thee, in a joyful persuasion that Thou, our Heavenly Father, carest for us : and may that peace of Thine, which passeth all understanding, fill our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Thus may we pass through the ensnaring scenes of this world, without being ensnared by them ; and meet the trying events of life, without making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. Thus may we finish our course with joy, and lay hold of that crown of righteousness which the Saviour will give to all them that love his appearance. Amen.

SUNDAY EVENING.

REVELATIONS XIV. 3.—*And they sang as it were a new song before the throne.*

POWERFUL emotions of joy seek for outward expression. This is one of the laws of our very nature. The expression will be suitable to the emotion. Grief pours forth its wailings ; joy is heard in the modulations of verse, and the sweet swells and cadences of music. One reason for this is, that thus our joy may be social. The shout of one warrior animates another. The song of one labourer cheers another, as well as himself, in their mutual toil. The song of victory, in one part of the field, stimulates the combatants where the battle is yet doubtful ; and the common chorus heightens the common triumph. In heaven all is social, all is action and re-action. There is song in heaven, because there is joy there ; joy too strong to be confined to the heart. It must not only be felt, but sung ; not only sung, but sung in united chorus, rising till the voice is “as the voice of many waters, as the voice of a great thunder.”

They sang “a new song.” Every deliverance experienced by the saints of God calls for a new song. How much more, therefore, this, the final deliverance from earth ! Their salvation is completed, and they now sing, “To him that loved us, and hath washed us from our sins in his blood, and made us Kings and Priests unto God ; to him be glory and dominion for ever.” Their song is new, as demanded by new blessings. Nor shall the song be new as to individuals only, but as to the whole glorified church. The church, even upon

earth, has ever sung the mercies and the judgments of God. At the passage of the Red Sea, the construction of the tabernacle, the opening of the temple, the people sang praises to God. As they went to their great festivals, they were found "coming to Zion with joy." So now. Every Sabbath hears the church singing her psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. And all heaven shall sing, when the millstone is cast into the waters, and antichrist is destroyed. And this song is new, because its great subject, Christ crucified, never waxes old. Even here "the people of God are satisfied with his goodness;" how much more when heavenly poetry modulates the verse, and heavenly voices attune the lay!

SING, Christian, sing! for you alone
 Possess the immortal power of song;
 The God who formed you for his own
 Inspires your heart, inspires your tongue:
 What though your pilgrim journey lies
 O'er desert mountains, rude and wild?
 The song of love which charms the skies,
 Has many a pilgrim's toil beguiled.

Then, Christian, sing! for soon the shade,
 The dreary shade which wraps the dead,
 Shall on your bosom, lowly laid,
 Shall on your silent lips be spread:
 While pity moves the heaving breast,
 While yet the tender tear can flow,
 Oh, sing the love that offers rest
 To man, the child of guilt and woe.

Sing! for these humble strains must cease,
 Lost in unutterable bliss,
 When, freed from sorrow, face to face,
 You see the Saviour as he is:
 When life, immortal life is won,
 The song of Hope no more can rise;
 She breathes her last, her sweetest tone,
 Before the dawn of paradise.

The voice of Faith and Hope must die;
 And not to mortal ears are given
 The lofty hymns of victory,
 Unknown but to the sons of heaven.
 Yet have our pilgrim-lays the theme
 Which crowns their song of joy above;
 In heaven and earth the Saviour's name
 Unites the eternal song of love.

PRAYER.

THOU, O Father, rulest in heaven, and there we shall behold Thy glory. But here we are pilgrims; here we see through a glass, darkly; here we are too often in a land of captivity, where sin tyrannizes over us. And how shall we sing the songs of Zion in a strange country? Blessed be Thy name, that, though Thou peculiarly lovest those Thy sons, who are ever with Thee, and surround the throne of Thy glory with a perpetual hymn of holiest adoration; Thou dost not overlook us Thy servants, who are still struggling with the weaknesses and trials of mortality; who, while we long for holiness, are still enchained by the powers of evil passions and temporal desires; and who are often tempted to disbelieve Thy promises, from their very vastness and overwhelming love, though we pray and strive to follow him who is the great leader and finisher of faith. O Father, visit us, even us, with Thy presence and Thy peace. Cast us not off for our misdeeds, nor reward us according to our great unworthiness. But look in pity upon our frailties; let Thine arm support us in our difficulties; and let Thy Holy Spirit guide us into all purity, and truth, and love, and peace, and trust, and joy for ever. Hear us, we entreat Thee, for the sake of Thine own infinite mercy, which Thou hast revealed unto us through Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

MONDAY MORNING.

MATTHEW XIX. 20.—*What lack I yet.*

“IF thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” How little the young man understood the nature and comprehensiveness of the law of God, is clear from his enquiry, “Which?” The Pharisaic Rabbis taught their followers, that if they singled out some one commandment, and scrupulously and uniformly discharged it, they would, thereby, compensate for many neglects and transgressions of the rest. The principle is a bad one; but it is only an extravagant statement of one of the most common sophisms of the spiritual life,—one by which men are continually influenced, and fatally misled,—one which applies to self-esteem, and

makes it throw around the veil of self-delusion, — which leads to rest on modes of faith, on the punctual, frequent, and fervent discharge of religious duties on the one hand ; or, on the other, on a rigid attention to the claims of justice, or on active efforts to promote attractive plans for human welfare, or on the exercise of compassion ; while pride and envy and uncharitableness rule in the heart, or while Christian sobriety and piety have no place there ;—while, on the one hand, the claims of social or domestic duty, or of personal virtue, are lost sight of, or very imperfectly discharged ; or, on the other, the great principle of godliness is neglected, the regulation of the temper, and the internal spirit of the mind.

In all ages there has been a baneful disposition, which, in some or other of its manifestations, we all more or less experience, “to tythe the mint and anise and cummin, and neglect the weightier matters of the law,”—justice, mercy, and faithful obedience. In all ages it has been found easier to erect an idol for self-worship, than to humble the spirit ; to give alms, than to exercise charity ; to correct others, than to rule oneself ; to burn incense in the censer of gold, than to offer up the affections of the soul ; to sacrifice the costly burnt offering, than to present ourselves a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God ; to build temples without, than to erect one within, to the Holy Being who is a spirit. And in our own day, it is found easier to rest on the righteousness of Christ, than to practice the holiness of heart and life which he enjoins ; to look for the kingdom of God without, than to seek it within ; to assist in conducting the living waters to the minds of others and to distant regions, than to receive it permanently into our own hearts ; to aid in promoting the freedom of the slave, than to free ourselves from the slavery of passion, of censoriousness, of selfishness, of pervading worldly-mindedness, which sends forth its various entangling fibres and roots of covetousness, self-indulgence, conceit and vanity, the love of pleasure and the pride of life. The work within must accompany the work without to render this acceptable to God ; yet, when the light of truth and duty is really burning in the heart, it is rarely, if ever, that it does not *obviously* contribute (effectually though not ostentatiously), to the well-being of others, present or eternal, in promoting, in different ways and

measures, the kingdom of righteousness and love ; and happy, indeed, are those, who, while their talents or situation in life give them the power to promote the welfare of multitudes, employ their power *faithfully* as a *trust* ; and, at the same time, carry the principles which they desire to guide their means of usefulness into the regulation of their own hearts.

O THOU, to whose all searching sight
The darkness shineth as the light !
Search, prove my heart ; it pants for Thee,
Oh burst these bonds, and set it free !

If in this darksome wild I stray,
Be Thou my Light, be Thou my Way !
No foes, no terrors shall I fear.
Nor fraud, while Thou, my God, art near.

When rising floods my soul o'erflow,
When sinks my heart in waves of woe ;
Do Thou Thy timely aid impart,
And raise my head, and cheer my heart.

My God ! whene'er Thy steps I see,
Dauntless, untired, I'd follow Thee !
Oh let Thy hand support me still,
And lead me to Thy holy will.

If rough and thorny be the way,
My strength proportion to my day ;
'Till toil and grief and pain shall cease,
Where all is calm and joy and peace.

PRAYER.

O THOU Searcher of hearts ! Be pleased to impart a ray of Thy heavenly light, to discover to us the evils and infirmities of our past lives ; that henceforth no secret sin may be undiscovered in our hearts ; that, by examining our lives and conversation by Thy law, as the rule and measure of our duty, we may discern the true state and condition of our souls ; and that, from a just sense of all our transgressions, we may be enabled, through the assistance of Thy grace, to forsake every evil way and disposition, and turn our feet unto Thy testimonies. Make us careful in the examination of our own hearts ; and most severe against our own offences. Give us inward confidence to rely on Thy fatherly providence ; that neither fear may deter us, nor any advantage

turn us from the path of truth. Let not the specious goodness of the end, encourage us to the unlawfulness of the means : but let Thy word be the warrant to all our actions. Let us shun whatever is wrong ; but never be induced to conceal falsely what wrong we have done. When censured, or our conduct mis-construed, enable us to check the eager spirit of self-vindication. Give us collectedness and discretion to guide us in unexpected difficulties. Quicken our consciences to reprove our past failures. Let our hearts be in covenant with our lips ; and let both our hearts and our tongues be under the guidance of the law of truth, of guileless simplicity, and of godly sincerity. And let us so walk before Thee in a course of holy living, that we may finally be made partakers of Thy mercy unto eternal life ; through Jesus Christ, our ever blessed Saviour. Amen.

MONDAY EVENING.

JOHN XV. 5.—*For without me ye can do nothing.*

THE case of the Apostles is our own case, with the exception only of the peculiarities of their situation and mission. Without Christ *we* can do nothing ; nothing in the concerns and ways of our highest moral life ; nothing in relation to those objects of faith and hope and duty, which he came to render clear and sure to the spirits of men. Without him, the soul is left without its support and guide. Without him, the soul struggles, but accomplishes nothing ; meditates, inquires, searches, but is made certain of nothing ; pursues various ends, but arrives at nothing. Without the “true light,” it gropes and wanders in the ancient darkness ; without “the true bread,” it hungers and faints ; without “the true vine,” it brings forth no fruit.

When we turn to an examination of ourselves and our religious state, it is then that the conviction is most forcibly impressed upon us, that we can do nothing without our Saviour. We arrive at our most intimate, consoling, and elevating knowledge of God the Father, through his Son Jesus Christ. We acquire our simplest, clearest, kindest, and most practical views of duty, from him and his life.

We learn from him distinctly what is the acceptable worship and service which man is required to render to his Maker. We know, through him and his resurrection, what we could not otherwise have known, whatever we might have hoped, that we are immortal, and that we shall live after death, and for ever. By him we are brought into connection with that bright community of angels and sainted spirits, whose voices we hear on earth by faith, cheering us in our journey, and inviting us to the enjoyment of their society and his own, everlastingly in heaven.

Christ is *my* companion and guide in the path of my mortal life, through all difficulty and danger, always ready and efficient with his counsel, sympathy and assistance. Am I in doubt concerning some question of duty, some rule of conscience? I have only to refer to his word, or his example, and my course is plain. Am I in peril from some lurking and besetting temptation, almost irresistible from the appeals which it makes to my weaker nature? One glance at his pure countenance, one touch of his invigorating hand, and I am my better self again, and have strength to spurn the assaulter away. Have I neglected to seek my helper in season? have I wandered from the right way? and do I at length see and deplore my fault, confused and ashamed? I hear his voice, not repelling me by harsh accents, but gently accepting my repentance, and inviting my return. Is my heart deeply pierced by disappointment or any grievous sorrow? or is my flesh troubled by racking pain? I look to the Man of sorrows, to the suffering Lamb of God, to his bleeding temples, to his agonizing cross; and his wounds are the healing of mine. Do I stand by the bedside of a departing friend, feeling that I am wretched; and that, when the final breath is breathed, I shall be more wretched still; but striving to restrain my tears, in the fear of disturbing the last moments of one I love? Christ is with me where I stand, assuring me that my friend will not die, but only sleep; and that I shall meet him again, and be parted from him no more. I bless the sacred accents, and my tears gather silently, and my bosom is calmed. And so when I come myself to the brink of the river, Christ will be with me then who has been with me always; and the warmth of his dear and glorious presence will dispel the chilly vapours; and

he will lead me safely through. What, then, could I do without him? How can I live, how can I die without him?

Master! to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. Thou hast said we can do nothing without thee. Son of God, it is true! Saviour of men, it is true! Thou art the vine, we are the branches. Our spiritual life is nourished and invigorated from thee; and if we bear fruit, it is because we abide in thee, and still receive the vital streams which flow from thee alone.

How sweet the words, and how benignly spoken
 By him whose blessings age to age have blest:
 "All ye who labour, and are heavy laden,
 "Come unto me, and I will give you rest!
 "Come unto me, however great the burden,
 "Come unto me, I can its weight remove;
 "And from these scenes of woe and war transport ye
 "To fields of blessedness, and peace, and love.
 "Come unto me; a sweet and heavenly welcome
 "Waits for the weary, waits for the oppressed;
 "Come unto me, ye pilgrims of earth's valley,
 "Come unto me, and I will give you rest.
 "Come unto me, ye feeble and ye fainting,
 "Come unto me, dejected and distressed;
 "Weeping and wasted, troubled and tormented,
 "Come unto me, and I will give you rest."

PRAVER.

AGAIN, before we go to rest, would we commit ourselves to Thy care, O God, beseeching Thee to forgive us for all our sins, and to keep alive Thy grace in our hearts;—to cleanse us from all indolence, pride, harshness, and selfishness; and to give us the spirit of meekness, humility, firmness, and love. O Lord! keep Thyself present to us ever, and perfect Thy strength in our weakness. Preserve us this night and strengthen us to bear whatever Thou shalt see fit to lay on us, whether pain, sickness, danger or distress. So much sin in the world, and suffering! and then the thought of our own private life, so full of comforts, is very startling when we contrast it with the lot of millions whose portion is so full of distress and trouble!—May we be kept humble and zealous; and mayest Thou give us grace to labour in our generation for the good of our brethren and for Thy glory. Do Thou keep us by night and by day, and strengthen us

to learn and to do Thy will.—Do Thou keep our hearts tender when we feel better. Do Thou make us gentle and patient, yet active and zealous. How much good have we received at Thy hands! and shall we not receive evil? Let us not fall from Thee in any trial. O Lord, let us cherish a sober mind, to be ready to bear evenly and not sullenly. O Lord, reveal Thyself to us through Christ, which knowledge will make all suffering and trials easy. O Lord, may we join with all Thy people in Heaven and on earth, in offering up our prayer to Thee through our Lord Jesus Christ; and in saying, “Glory be to Thy most holy name for ever and ever.” Amen.

TUESDAY MORNING.

ROMANS XII. 12.—*Continuing instant in prayer.*

WITH a heart disposed to love, to fear, to trust, and to serve God, let me observe the objects in which He is more immediately blessing myself individually, and those connected with me, and consider the ordinary circumstances of every day; then let me reflect whether they ought not to excite in me those frequent secret upraisings of the heart to God which are a fulfilment of the command, “Pray without ceasing.”

Have I a comfortable habitation? When I enter it, when I think of it, let me acknowledge Him from whose goodness I received it. Have I and my family health and abundance? Let us rejoice in it as the gift of God. Do I retain the soundness of my faculties? What gratitude do I owe for their preservation! Am I blessed with the intercourse of friendship and love? Let me thank Him who gave me friends and enables me to enjoy them. Have I children on whom I look with mingled delight and solicitude? Let me acknowledge the goodness of God, and look up for His guidance and blessing, that I may be enabled to rear them to His glory. Can I pursue my daily labour? Let me thank the God of my strength. Am I feeble, or suffering under any disease? Let me be strong in faith, and endure as seeing Him who is invisible. Have I escaped any danger? I would bless my Preserver. Has any one whom I love been

rescued from peril? Let me acknowledge the hand that saved him. Am I able to minister to the necessities of others? Let me praise Him who has given me the means and the disposition. Do I see the deaf, the blind, the lame, and the diseased; and think, with joy, that I am in health, and can see and hear and move where I will without pain? Let my joy be that of gratitude; and, with my sympathies for those that suffer, let my thanksgiving for myself ascend to Heaven. Do I enjoy rest after fatigue; and do my hours pass in tranquil pleasure? Let me thank God for this season of rest and peace. Am I angry with another? Let my prayer arise, "Forgive me my trespasses, as I forgive others." Am I oppressed with the cares of a family or of business? Remembering that I must give an account to God, let me ask if they are ordered according to His will. Am I tempted to indulge any bad passion, or doubting concerning any dispositions or conduct? Let me remember that the eye of God is upon me, and seek from Him grace and guidance. Am I sensible of having wasted my time, or abused any talent; of having spoken rashly, or acted unkindly? Let me ask God to guard me in future temptations. Do I feel a good disposition, and have I overcome a trial of my faith and patience? Let me pray to God to strengthen what is right, and thank Him who has hitherto made me victorious.

By thus habitually looking to God; acknowledging Him in all circumstances and events; committing myself to Him, and seeking His approbation in all my dispositions, indulgences, and pursuits, shall I make every action an act of devotion, and thus be "Instant in prayer."

To prayer, to prayer! for the morning breaks,
And earth in her Maker's smile awakes:
His light is on all below and above,
The light of gladness and life and love.
Oh then, on the breath of this early air,
Send upward the incense of grateful prayer.

To prayer! for the glorious sun is gone.
And the gathering darkness of night comes on:
Like a curtain from God's kind hand it flows
To shade the couch where His children repose.
Then kneel while the watching stars are bright,
And give your last thoughts to the Guardian of night.

To prayer! for the day that God hath blest
Comes tranquilly on with its welcome rest.
It speaks of creation's early bloom :
It speaks of the Prince who burst the tomb.
Then summon the spirit's exalted powers,
And devote to heaven the hallowed hours.

There are smiles and tears in the mother's eyes,
For her new-born infant beside her lies.
Oh hour of bliss! when the heart o'erflows
With a rapture a mother only knows.
Let it gush forth in words of fervent prayer :
Let it swell up to heaven for her precious care.

There are smiles and tears in that gathering band,
Where the heart is pledged with the trembling hand.
What trying thoughts in her bosom swell,
As the bride bids parent and home farewell!
Kneel down by the side of the tearful fair,
And strengthen the perilous hour with prayer.

Kneel down by the dying sinner's side,
And pray for his soul through him that died.
Large drops of anguish are thick on his brow;
Oh what is earth and its pleasures now?
And what shall assuage his dark despair
But the penitent cry of humble prayer?

Kneel down at the couch of departing faith,
And hear the last words the believer saith.
He has bidden adieu to his earthly friends ;
There is peace in his eye that upward bends ;
There is peace in his calm, confiding air ;
For his last thoughts are God's, his last words prayer.

The voice of prayer at the sable bier !
A voice to sustain, to soothe and to cheer.
It commends the spirit to God who gave ;
It lifts the thoughts from the cold, dark grave ;
It points to the glory where he shall reign
Who whispered, "Thy brother shall rise again."

The voice of prayer in the world of bliss !
But gladder, fairer, than rose from this.
The ransomed shout to their glorious King,
Where no sorrow shades the soul as they sing ;
But a sinless, joyous song they raise ;
And their voice of prayer is eternal praise.

Awake! awake! gird up thy strength
To join that holy band at length.
To Him who unceasing love displays,
Whom the powers of heaven unceasing praise,
To Him let thy heart and thy powers be given ;
For a life of prayer is a life of heaven!

PRAYER.

O THOU who hearest prayer, our Father and our God! In the glad and holy light of this morning, we meet before Thee. Thou hast given us the sweet rest of sleep, and hast called us to rejoice in the blessings of the day. Thou art our constant Guardian and Benefactor. We praise Thee, and would lift up our voices in thanksgiving, to celebrate Thy lovingkindness and mercy. May Thy goodness lead us to repentance, and bind us to Thee in gratitude. May our hearts trust in Thee, and find peace. Fill us, O God, with Thine own Spirit of truth and love. Deliver us from whatever is false and evil. Strengthen our good purposes, and rebuke our wrong desires. Let us not be blinded by folly, nor be overcome by temptation. May it be our delight to do Thy will in the days of our health and gladness; and if Thou shouldst call us to bear any kind of suffering, may we say, Thy will be done. Guide us by Thy counsel so long as we live, and prepare us for Thy judgment hereafter. We pray for those whom we love. May they be led in the paths of peace and salvation. May all men be taught the way of righteousness. Do Thou enlighten the ignorant, convert the sinful, comfort the miserable, and let all people seek Thee, and find Thee through Jesus Christ the Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

TUESDAY EVENING.

PSALM XVIII. 1.—*I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength.*

WHO are they that love the Lord? To love Him truly we must first believe that He loveth us. We feel His power; we trace everywhere His wisdom; we must also be fully assured of His love to each creature of His hand. And this assurance of His love must not be one of the understanding merely. It must be engrafted into every faculty of our nature; it must entwine itself with every affection of our heart; it must be evident to us in every thing that is around us. When we, then, have truly faith in the love of God, ought it not to produce a return of love? Can we do otherwise than surrender our souls to that love which is ever encircling us, even when we know it not; Earthly affection is very precious. We feel that love is the only

meet return we can make for love, here below ; yet how poor is the love that is offered us here, in comparison with that which our Heavenly Father freely bestows upon us ! What a return should we make to Him !

They that love the Lord, then, are those who, having a full confidence in His wisdom and power, have also a perfect assurance of His unbounded, unchanging love for us, which so blends itself with our very souls, that we devote to Him as a faint return, every thought, every wish, every affection ; that we withhold from Him no purpose, no aspiration, no desire ; that we lay our hopes and fears all before Him ; that love to Him influences all our actions ; in fine that we offer to Him the purest devotion of love of which our souls are capable.

Now such must have great peace. Being convinced of the power and wisdom of the Lord, "their strength," they know that everything is ordered by Him, and must be so ordered as to accomplish the ends which He has in view ; and, being convinced of His love, they are assured that what He has willed must be for the well-being of His creatures. Now, peace results from this harmony of wisdom, power and love, for there can enter in it no discordant element. In proportion, then, as our love to God is perfect, we shall fully enter into His designs, and feel a calm and happy sympathy with all that He doeth,—which is peace.

What causes the want of peace among men in general, and, above all, in our own hearts ? It is because we separate ourselves from God, and then all is discordant. We set up our own wills as the standard of our desires ; and then they are crossed, and we are fretted, and seek to satisfy them everywhere but in the only true source. Our souls are out of harmony with creation ; with the moral and spiritual world ; and thus everything jars against them.

But let the love of God reign within us ; let it pervade all our motives and excite all our actions ; let it be shed round all that befalls us, or rather let us open our eyes to see it for it is ever there,—we shall have tranquillity and even happiness under every dispensation of providence ; we shall not be wearying ourselves out with impatient longings for that which it is not intended that we should have ; but we shall find enjoyment in the present duties and employments

which are before us ; and, above all, our souls will be filled more and more with that peace of God which He has vouchsafed here below to those that love Him, which is a glimpse and foretaste of that which will be perfect above.

THOU hidden love of God, whose height,
 Whose depth, unfathomed, no man knows !
 I see from far Thy beauteous light ;
 Inly I sigh for Thy repose :
 Then shall my heart from care be free,
 When it hath found repose in Thee.

Father ! Thy sovereign aid impart
 To save me from low-thoughted care !
 Chase this self-will through all my heart,
 Through all its latent mazes there :
 Make me Thy duteous child, that I
 May raise to Thee a trustful cry.

Each moment draw from earth away
 My heart that lowly waits Thy call !
 Speak to my inmost soul and say,
 "I am thy life, thy God, thy all !"
 Thy love to reach, Thy voice to hear,
 Thy power to feel, be all my prayer.

PRAAYER.

GIVE us, O Lord, Thy Holy Spirit ; that our understanding and all our faculties may be resigned to the discipline and doctrine of our Saviour. Let our faith be the parent of a good life ; a strong shield to repel the assaults of sin ; the source of a holy hope, of modest desires, of love and confidence in Thee, and a never failing charity to all men. Whatever spiritual evils are yet remaining in our hearts, direct us to the knowledge of them, and the proper means of removing them. Whenever we wander from Thee, shew us our error, though it should be by Fatherly correction : let pain or sorrow, if needful, lead us home ; but never, oh never, leave us to ourselves. Carry us still forward, O Heavenly Father, by all the methods of Thy providence and grace, till we are prepared for that world, where we shall no more bewail the darkness of our understandings and disorders or wanderings of our hearts, but where we shall love Thee entirely, rejoice in Thee triumphantly, and celebrate Thy praises to all eternity, in the presence of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

WEDNESDAY MORNING.

PSALM XXIII. 4.—*Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.*

COMPELLED, as even the most spiritually-minded are, to bend their attention to the functions and feelings of the bodily frame,—dependent, as we all are, upon their healthy condition, not only for physical comfort, but for the proper exercise of our mental powers,—it is not to be wondered at, that the thoughts should sometimes wander to a period when this watchfulness will be no more needed,—when the most anxious care will no longer avail to prevent the vital flame from being extinguished. The stiffening of the limbs, once so full of activity,—the closing in utter darkness of the eyes, once the inlet of so much light and beauty,—the muteness of the lips, so long vocal with thought and feeling,—the coldness, the gloom, the stillness of the tomb,—all will occasionally intrude themselves on the imagination, and excite apprehensions that these fearful changes must be preceded by mental and bodily sufferings of an appalling nature.

If, however, we now and then glance at this picture, it is not one worthy of being *dwelt* upon by the Christian :—it is not a fit theme for the preacher or the poet to pass upon the Christian's consideration.

Death is no accident of our being, it is an appointment of our Heavenly Father. God has taken this event into His immediate charge, and we may certainly know that whatever may be the terrors of its appearance, it is appointed in wisdom and in love. It is appointed by the same Being who opens our eyes upon the glories of this marvelous world, and is the Author of all the happiness we have ever enjoyed. A wise dispensation ordered by a Benevolent Creator, does not deserve to be figured as an "enemy of the human race." At whatever season, in whatever mode death reaches us, it cannot come without the cognizance of that knowledge which precludes the supposition of error, or of that mercy on which every doubt and every sorrow may lean. The event of death

is unalterably the appointment of our Father in Heaven, equally with His kindest and brightest dispensations.

Ignorant as we are, through the merciful arrangement of Providence, of the time and manner of our dissolution, we shall be unwise to speculate upon that wherein we cannot arrive at any reasonable and satisfactory conclusion. Experience shows that death is usually attended with less suffering than has been dreaded. The most painful diseases are not the most fatal ones ; and they who recover often suffer more than those who die. Death is often painless, often instantaneous.

Nor let us shudder at the decay of our bodily organs when the liberated spirit has no longer need of their aid. The seed perishes in the earth while the young plant is rising into new existence.

And why should the long sleep of death appal us ? Whether the change from death to life be immediate, or the unconscious repose be that of thousands of years, to him that "falls asleep" there will be no sensible interval between death and resurrection,—the night of dissolution will be instantly succeeded by the dawn of eternity.

And in that eternity to what a glorious scene will the faithful Christian awake ! Re-united with the dearest objects of his earthly regards, in a state where sorrow, and sin, and pain, and death, will be known no more ;—in fellowship with the wise and good of all who have existed in every period of the world ;—in the society of that blessed Saviour who has sanctified the dark mansions of the tomb to all his followers ;—and admitted to more intimate communion with his Heavenly Father ;—how happy and how favoured will be his exaltation ! how wise, how merciful will he regard that appointment which conducted him through the portals of the tomb to such felicity !

"When the sun of my life sets behind the dark mountains, and that night has come to me which comes to all, I will not be depressed by its deepening shadows ; I will not dread its gathering terrors ; I will not shrink from its narrow bed." "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me ; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

O CHRISTIAN! to thy vows be true ;
Be firm in faith,—in hope be brave :
Contemplate not with coward view
The dying hour, the silent grave.

Chase from thy thoughts these groveling fears ;
On nobler prospects fix *thy* gaze ;
Turn from the vale of night and tears
To heavenly scenes, to deathless days.

Thy faith, *thy* hope can pierce the skies ;
There, radiant with a light divine,
The loved, the pure, the just, the wise,
In holy, happy concourse join.

There, freed from earth's oppressive load,—
From all that grieves,—from all that taints,
Behold them in their bright abode,
A blest "Communion of the Saints."

In nearer intercourse with God,—
Rejoicing in their Saviour's love,—
They little heed the gloomy road
Which led them to their bliss above.

Sweet their employment now to trace
The mysteries that perplexed them here ;
No clouds now veil the Throne of Grace,
All that was dark is bright and clear.

Christian ! oh fear not life's last breath ;
To thee a favoured lot is given :
The pang that dims thy eyes with death,
Unseals them for thy birth in heaven.

PRAYER.

O ALMIGHTY Father ! Fill our souls with so deep a sense of the excellency of things spiritual, that, our affections being weaned from the false allurements of sin, we may, with the prudence of a holy discipline and governed desires, with clear resolutions and a free spirit, have our conversation heavenward. May we use Thy creatures soberly and temperately, that our spirits may not be rendered unapt for the performance of duty ; or our bodies, helpless ; or our affections, sensual and unholy. May no impure thoughts pollute these souls which Thou hast sanctified ; no unclean words deprave these tongues which Thou hast commanded to be the organs of Thy praise ; no unholy or unchaste

actions defile these bodies, which Thou hast appointed to be the temples of Thy Spirit.—And when we have done and suffered Thy will here upon earth, with sincerity, though alas ! with many imperfections ; when we have finished our earthly course, and are drawing near to the gates of death ; may no unrepented sins rise up to our remembrance, and set themselves in array against us : and may our unallowed defects and imperfections, while they render us humble, deprive us not of peace and hope. Whenever we die, may we die in the Lord ; and be finally received, with all dear unto us, into those mansions where the sun shall no more go down, nor the moon withdraw its light ; where the Lord shall be our everlasting light, and the days of mourning shall be ended. Grant this, we pray Thee, through Thine infinite mercy in Christ Jesus. Amen.

WEDNESDAY EVENING.

PSALM LXXVIII. 25.—*Man did eat angels' food.*

TRULY was it angels' food which fed those children of promise in their long wanderings to the earthly Canaan ! They were following the pillar of God's providence, and His hand showered down on them from heaven pure nourishment ; He brought them meat on the wings of the wind ; He drew for them, from the barren rock, a stream of living water. Nor then alone did the Father of all provide for His children "angels' food." He made the ravens His messengers to His faithful servant, to carry him bread ; He fed not only him, but that faithful woman who had shared with him her last morsel ; He did not desert Elijah when, alone in the wilderness, his body was weak, his faith fainting, and he requested for himself that he might die, but sent His angel to him with food, in the strength of which he went forty days. How frequently was that chosen nation reminded,—and we, through it, may be so too,—that our Heavenly "Father knoweth that we have need of these things ;" that we not only have from Him our daily bread ; but that, if we are in the path He has commanded, when that fails, He will give us bread from heaven.

And did he who came into this world to raise our hopes beyond it; did he, the Holy One of God, forbid us to seek even the food which perisheth? He himself felt pity for the multitude, when they were fainting with hunger in the desert; and on two separate occasions, having first given thanks to the Father, he brake to them bread which earth had not produced. After he had himself put off mortality, when his "children" told him that they had no meat, the waves, at his command, bare them food, and, for the last time, he brake unto them.

The age of miracles is past; man *has* eaten "angels' food," and has received nourishment for the body, in a direct and evident manner, from the hand of God; we require no longer supernatural proofs to convince us, that "like as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him;" we have the written record, the sure word of testimony abiding with us. It is *He* who still giveth us our daily bread;—the period of His parental care of us is not passed;—man still eateth "angels' food."

But there is a holier, a more enduring bread,—that which is more truly "angels' food,"—the bread from heaven which shall never perish. And still it is from our Father that we have this blessed food. He sent His well-beloved Son into the world, that, through him, we might receive the bread of life; that from him we might draw of that pure well, which shall supply us, not only in our wanderings in this wilderness, but when we reach the Heavenly Canaan.

Oh may we, the children of His love and grace, draw with joy from the wells of salvation; may we eat with thankfulness the bread that the Saviour has broken to us; may we receive, with grateful hearts, the "angels' food" that is given us here below, that we may share it with glorified spirits above, in the presence of our Father!

O HAND of bounty, largely spread,
By whom our every want is fed!
Whate'er we touch, or taste, or see,
We owe them all, O Lord, to Thee:
The corn, the oil, the purple wine,
Are all Thy gifts, and only Thine!

The bread Messiah multiplied,
 The stream his word to nectar dyed,
 The stormy wind, the wheeling flood
 That silent at his mandate stood ;—
 How well they knew Thy voice divine,
 Whose works they were, and only Thine !

Though now no more on earth we trace
 Such footsteps of celestial grace,
 Obedient to Thy word and will,
 We seek Thy daily mercy still ;
 Its blessed beams around us shine,
 And Thine we are, and only Thine.

PRAYER.

LORD ! We are indeed sinful creatures : but oh ! do not condemn us. Speak peace and pardon to our souls through Thy beloved Son, who died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to Thee. As weak and insufficient for our own happiness, strengthen us with all might, and be Thou the portion of our hearts. Should we earnestly pray for constant health and prosperity, we might implore a curse instead of a blessing. Should we pray to be delivered from all affliction, we might desire Thee to withhold from us the most wholesome correction and the greatest mercies. Sensible of our own ignorance, and confiding in Thy wisdom and goodness, we leave ourselves and all our concerns in Thy hands. Yet, in humble submission and trust, we would ask of Thee our daily bread, and whatever else is convenient for life and godliness. Bestow upon us contented and thankful spirits. Endue us with that hope which purifies the heart, which is an anchor of the soul, sure and stedfast, and which maketh not ashamed at the hour of death. May we ever maintain such a sense of our frailty, and of the temptations that surround us, as may render us watchful and humble. May we avoid all appearance of evil ; and never cause Thy good ways to be evil spoken of, through our misconduct or our folly. May Thy grace, which bringeth salvation, effectually teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts ; and to live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world ; looking for the glorious appearance of Thee, the great God, and of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

THURSDAY MORNING.

MARK IV. 39.—*And he arose and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, "Peace, be still!" and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.*

JESUS is no longer by our side, in bodily presence to command the elements. The external world seems only incidentally to confess his presence. Yet amid the tempests of life let us still feel our Saviour near. Let us have faith. It is well for us not to doubt; still if we doubt, let us pray, and doubt shall be turned to conviction. Christ still works wonders. Let us pray the Father; and whatever we ask according to His will, the spirit of our Lord will enable us to perform. "Peace, be still!" shall be the answer to our troubled spirits. When Jesus stilled the storm, terror and awe filled the minds of beholders; but no alarm shall follow his workings now. Peace shall not always be without; but there shall be tranquillity within. Yet there shall be often peace without. When the love of God rules in our hearts, we shall be able to control the violence of others. The storms of passion may rage around us; our ears may be harrassed with sounds of tumult and of passion. If we had faith, we could do something to quell the tempest. Our soft answers should turn away wrath; we, who ruled our spirits, should be stronger than the mighty; we should return good for evil, till the face of the world became changed. Oh that we could know, even we, at least in this our day, the things that make for our peace!

But we must have strength from within, if we are to operate successfully on that which is without. The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, must keep our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ. We are not to be troubled, nor to be afraid, but to believe on the Father and the Son.

Ah! how much do we need this faith, even when we think we need it least. If we trust to our own strength, we find that it is weak as the frail vessel which offers but a plank to keep off destruction. We sail hopefully on the smooth waters; we forget that they are deep as well as smooth. We think that our principles are firm, and that they will float us

safely over the sea of life. We do not mark when they are giving way ; that temptation, like the deceitful waters, is stealing through them ; that our bark is gradually filling ; that even, whilst all is serene above and beneath us, we may be sinking in the flood of pleasure, and be dead, while we seem to live. Or we may trust to the cloudless sky, and know not that the strong winds of passion, which are now allayed, may rise up again, and, opposing the current of duty, raise a tempest around us ; that the moon may withdraw its shining, and the stars refuse their lustre ; that clouds may blacken the atmosphere of our souls, and the light of conscience be overcast. Little do we know ourselves when all is calm around us ! Well is it for us, if Christ is always our companion, that we may in the time of peril, find him our aid ; that he may say to the stormy waves, "Peace, be still !"

There is a storm which all must pass through ; the black clouds of sickness will gather round us, or the blasts of violence will dash our vessel on the rock. Let us not fear. We may sink, but we shall be borne in safety through the waves ; we shall be unconscious, but we shall first hear the soft, but commanding words, "Peace, be still !" We shall wake and find ourselves at our desired haven. Our feet shall rest on the shore, where "everlasting spring abides, and never-withering flowers." We shall look back on the wreck of our earthly hopes without a sigh. We shall be where storms can agitate no more ; where there is no briny sea, but pure fountains of the waters of life ; where there shall be no winds, but the blessed breath of heaven ; no clouds, but the clouds of glory that convey to the enraptured sight the fulness of divine love. Yet still the loved voice which hushed the tempest will be heard to whisper, "Peace, peace ! not as the world giveth, give I unto you !"

FEAR was within the tossing bark,
When stormy winds grew loud,
And waves came rolling high and dark,
And the tall mast was bowed.

And men stood breathless in their dread,
And baffled in their skill ;
But one was there, who rose and said
To the wild sea—"Be still !"

And the wind ceased,—it ceased !—that word
Passed through the gloomy sky ;
The troubled billows knew their Lord,
And fell beneath his eye.

And slumber settled on the deep,
And silence on the blast ;
They sank, as flowers that fold to sleep
When sultry day is past.

O thou, that in its wildest hour
Didst rule the tempest's mood,
Send thy meek spirit forth in power,
Soft on our souls to brood !

Thou that didst bow the billow's pride,
Thy mandate to fulfil !
Oh speak to passion's raging tide,
Speak, and say, "*Peace, be still !*"

PRAYER.

WEAK, O God, is man, when Thou forsakest him ; foolish are his counsels, when they are formed without Thee ; wild is his progress, when he wanders from Thee. Thou crossest our designs, that we may fear Thee ; Thou stoppest us in our ways, that we may know Thee. Thy checks are the symptoms of Thy mercy ; Thy silence is the harbinger of judgment. When we look upon our former worldliness, we abhor the sinfulness of our hearts. Strengthen us that we may lead a new life. Make us increasingly sensible of our true condition ; and perfect us in the good work Thou hast begun. Let us never rest on an arm of flesh. In all our designs, be Thou our counsellor ; in all our actions, be Thou our guide ; and let Thy will and Thy approbation be our chief end. Vouchsafe to deliver us from our weakness, and to save us through the mighty power of Thy spiritual strength. Thus be our support, as long as Thou hast work of active or patient service for us in this imperfect being ; and when Thou hast done with us here, and callest us to the unseen world, may we not feel that we are losing that which has hitherto been our life, but that we are finding that which before we had enjoyed in part only ;—even Thy perfect love, O Father, in the eternal kingdom of Thy blessed Son, our Redeemer. Amen.

THURSDAY EVENING.

JOHN XI. 28.—*The Master is come, and calleth for thee.*

BLESSED words these for the sorrowing, loving Mary ! No wonder that she “arose quickly, and came unto him.” They who were mourning with her, and had seen the absorbing anguish of her soul, thought that she was going to the grave to weep there. They saw her outward grief;—they knew not her inward joy;—she was obeying the summons to him “who had the words of eternal life.”

Yet the same tender, half-reproachful complaint escaped her, as she threw herself at the feet of her beloved Lord, that had been uttered by Martha;—“If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died !” She knew his love for the departed, and she was, doubtless, fully assured, as her sister was, that whatsoever he should ask of God, God would give it him. But the feelings of nature for a short time prevailed over her faith, and the compassionate Saviour did not chide them.

When we have lost, by death, a beloved friend, do we linger weeping round the grave which holds only the perishing mortal covering; or do we listen to the voice which is calling us also, and go unto him who is the resurrection and the life? Though tears will flow, do we, even while they are gushing in sad abundance, throw ourselves at our Saviour’s feet, and listen to his words, and thence gather strength to go *with him* “even to the spot where the dead is laid?” If we do, we shall no longer find it a place of deep mourning and mysterious dread: immortal flowers of ever-growing beauty will be springing from it; and rays of eternal hope will be shedding a glorious halo around it. We shall not, indeed, as Mary did, see the stone removed, and the beloved one reappear in that mortal form which would again subject him to the trials and sufferings, which for him have been terminated; but the eye of faith will behold him rising, clad in the heavenly raiment of the sons of God; and his spirit will seem to come and make its abode with us, and comfort us in our sojourning here.

Yes, beloved Master! may we ever listen to thy voice when it calls us! And may we ever hear it calling us, with thy accents of tender entreaty to the prodigal to “arise and

go to his Father ;" of encouragement to the penitent, laden and oppressed with the heavy burden of his sins ; of sympathy and comfort to the mourner, and of blessed promise to his faithful followers ;—"In my Father's house are many mansions ; if it were not so I would have told you ; I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

SINNER ! the Master is come !

Wilt thou not list to his voice ?

Gently he calleth thee home,

Oh let his way be thy choice !—

Then haste, Sinner, haste, for the Saviour is here !

He loves thee, he calls thee, thou needest not fear !

Penitent, come ! for thy sighs,

Thy tears shall be all wiped away ;—

"Thy sins are forgiven,"—then rise,

Thy darkness is turned to day ;

Thy Father hath sent thee His well-beloved Son,

To call thee to bliss when thy race is well run.

Mourner ! the Master is here ;

Haste thee with him to the grave :

Though warm flows the fast-gushing tear,

Thou knowest his power to save.

Thou knowest through him that the joy shall be given,

To be with thy loved one, for ever, in Heaven.

Christian ! thy Master is come,

He knows all thy faith and thy love ;

He calls thee on high to thy home,

His Father's blest mansions above :

The world is o'ercome, and thy trials are o'er,

From the house of thy God thou art parted no more.

PRAYER.

DIRECT us, Heavenly Father, to the right and faithful improvement of all the aids Thou hast afforded for purifying and perfecting our nature. Teach us to understand clearly, to believe firmly, to value justly, and to comply with sincerely, that last and bright revelation Thou hast given through Thy beloved Son.—Mortify in us all proud thoughts and vain opinions of ourselves. Let us go before our brethren in nothing but in striving to do them honour and to give Thee glory. Never let us seek our own praise,

nor unduly delight in it when offered : but may we learn of our Saviour to be meek and lowly in heart, and thus find rest unto our souls.—Prepare and fit us for every condition and for every change : but especially for our last and greatest change. Strengthen our faith in the time of sickness and trial. Suffer us not, through pain of body, or weakness of mind, to let go our trust and confidence in Thee. May we so pass through the remaining days of life, that, when we come to the day of death, we may have nothing to do but to die ; and may we be enabled to commit ourselves to Thee, with a peaceful hope in Thy mercy unto eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

FRIDAY MORNING.

HEBREWS XI. 34.—*Out of weakness were made strong.*

WHENCE is our strength ? From God alone. How can we obtain strength ? Solely by coming to Him. If our Saviour said, “I can of mine own self do nothing,” how much more ought this to be the language of *our* lips, and the silent homage of *our* hearts ?

Yet though so weak, children of the dust, we often fancy that we are strong. Our intellectual energy is great ; we have a consciousness of power to penetrate the worlds of matter and the realms of thought, and there to make vast conquests. We imagine that we have moral strength ; all the commandments have we kept from our youth, and we hold a just and holy sway over the minds of men. Yet we are not strong, for this very seeming strength separates us from Him without whom nothing is strong, and makes us worship self instead of the Creator.

Then he that is strong with his own strength falls before temptation ; he is humbled in the dust ; he has no refuge on earth ; he flies to his Maker ; he confesses his weakness ; he implores strength from above ; and out of weakness he is made strong.

Blessed are the sorrows which lead us to God ; blessed the trials which shows us our weakness. He who cast down, surely will raise up ;—He who deadens the flame which burnt with an impure light, will rekindle it with His own

brightness;—He who denies the strength we ask for in ignorance, will make His grace sufficient for us,—will make us strong out of weakness.

O my Father ! may I seek no help but of Thee ! May I cast all my care upon Thee, and seek strength in Thee alone !

O LORD ! Thy heavenly grace impart,
And fix my frail, inconstant heart ;
Henceforth my chief desire shall be,
To dedicate myself to Thee,
To Thee, my God ! to Thee.

Whate'er pursuits my time employ,
One thought shall fill my heart with joy ;
That silent, secret thought shall be,
That all my hopes are fixed on Thee,
On Thee, my God ! on Thee.

Thy glorious eye pervadeth space ;
Thy presence, Lord ! fills every place ;
And wheresoe'er my lot may be,
Still shall my spirit cleave to Thee,
To Thee, my God ! to Thee.

Renouncing every worldly thing,
Safe 'neath the covert of Thy wing,
My sweetest thought henceforth shall be,
That all I want I find in Thee,
In Thee, my God ! in Thee.

PRAYER.

LORD and giver of life ! Father of our Spirits ! we would this morning, with all seriousness and solemnity, renew the dedication of ourselves to Thee. Take, we beseech Thee, the full possession of our hearts, which Thou hast formed for Thyself : and help us to make an unfeigned surrender of all that we have, to Thee, the great Lord of all. With pure fervour would we cleave unto Thee : oh preserve us to Thyself ; and let nothing be able to separate us from Thy love. Help us to chase away all worldly affections from our hearts ; and to raise our thoughts to spiritual and heavenly things. May the great work of religion be considered by us as the most important and delightful employment in which we can be engaged : and in this let us never be slothful or negligent, but always prepared to serve Thee with cheerfulness and holy zeal. Form our souls to a likeness

of Thyself; and, through the influence of Thy good Spirit, may we be led into the same mind that was in Christ. Let Thy blessing be upon our actions, and Thy grace direct our intentions; that the whole course of our lives, and the principal designs and wishes of our hearts, may always tend to the advancement of Thy glory, the good of others, and the eternal salvation of our own souls. Father! command what Thou pleasest; and give us grace to perform diligently what Thou commandest. Permit what seemeth good to Thee, and give us grace to suffer patiently what Thou permittest. Let Thy blessing descend upon us and all ours; and dwell in our hearts for ever. We humbly supplicate this, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

FRIDAY EVENING.

JOHN XII. 7. *Then said Jesus, "Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this."*

TO what an affecting incident does this allude, and what depths does it reveal of our Saviour's inmost soul!

Six days before that Passover when his soul was to be troubled even to death; when he knew that the city which he loved and would have saved, would turn against him, and that the end would be,—his last conflict in and over death;—Jesus retired, for a short space, to that peaceful village, beneath the hallowed mount, where those dwelt whom he *loved*. He was received at the house of Simon, the leper. We knew nothing of him but this, that he was, doubtless, one who owed to Christ the power of enjoying the blessings of life. He testified his respect by preparing a supper for him, and by inviting to it one who was bound to his Master by the double tie of love and gratitude. "Lazarus was one that sat at table;" the usages of society did not permit the sisters also to be there; but Martha, unchecked even by the former gentle reproof of her Lord, obtained the privilege of serving him. The two first Evangelists do not mention these touching circumstances; but merely the fact, that Jesus was received at the house of Simon. John, who dwelt with affectionate interest on what most interested the

personal feelings of his beloved Master, particularly says, that Lazarus was there at table, "Who had been dead." The gentle-hearted, shrinking Mary did not join her sister in her mark of respect, but prepared one characteristic of herself. She had, on a former occasion, sat at his feet, and heard his words; now, her heart overflowing with gratitude to him who had restored her brother to her, she brings a pure and very costly offering of balsam of spikenard to anoint them. Matthew and Mark only mention the general fact of a "woman" having done so; and say, that she anointed his head, but add the striking circumstance of her breaking the alabaster box which contained the offering, doubtless that it never might be put to a less holy use. *John* knew that it was the grateful Mary; and observed, that she did not pour the balsam only on his head; but humbly "anointed his feet, wiping them with the hair of her head." Those around knew not the mind that was in her, and did not sympathize with her; they even expressed displeasure against her. How must her heart have overflowed with emotion, when she heard the blessed words from her Lord, "She hath done a good deed for me, she hath done what she could;" yet her joy must have mingled with the deep sorrow by the touching addition, "for the day of my burial hath she done this."

Thus ends the record of this beautiful incident, except that the two first Evangelists add a prophetic remark of our Lord, which they have thus fulfilled, "Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, this also which she hath done, shall be spoken for a memorial of her."

To us, how much does this simple narrative reveal of our Saviour's thoughts and feelings and trials! He had come to Jerusalem to fulfil his mission by his death; his few last remaining days were spent in public, teaching in the Temple! but every evening found him at the beloved village of Bethany, which was now hallowed by having been the scene of the most remarkable display of that mighty power which had been given him by the Father. Here he was received by one who probably owed to him all that could make life valuable: the friend whom he loved was here; and the two grateful sisters, each showing her affectionate respect in her

own peculiar way. We can perceive that Jesus deeply felt the marks of friendship he received ; for though he said but little, that was full of tenderness. But nothing could banish from his mind his approaching trial. The thought of it did not shed a gloom around him ; but all around mingled with it. "For the day of my burial hath she done this." He knew that it was near, but contemplated it with holy calmness ; for to him the tomb was but the gate of Heaven. And his own approaching trials did not make him less than ever tenderly considerate of others. He knew that Mary's feelings would prompt her to pay him, even at the tomb, the last tribute of love ; but that she might be spared that agonizing duty by the reflection, that by abstaining from it she was fulfilling his wishes, he desired her to regard this as her final offering.

Truly did he "bear our sorrows ;"—truly did he bear them as the beloved Son of a Heavenly Father ! How can we sufficiently love and reverence him, who, with trials and temptations like our own, but far greater than we are called upon to bear, was so pure and holy, so full of love and piety ?

SEE the grateful sister bending
 O'er her much-loved Saviour's form ;
 While her thanks to heaven ascending
 From her heart burst pure and warm.
 For his mercy, prompt to save,
 Doth she bless her heavenly Lord ;
 For a brother from the grave,
 To the light of life restored.

Who shall blame the kind oblation,
 Perfumes rich, profusely shed ?
 No, through each remotest nation
 Shall her grateful fame be spread !
 Fair the diamond's star-like blaze,
 Through the dark mine richly strewed ;
 Fairer far the gentle rays
 Of the Christian's gratitude.

PRAYER.

WE praise Thee, O our God and Father, for the gospel of pardon and of peace, which Thou hast sent us through Thy Son. We thank Thee for that love which he manifested, in submitting to death for us ; for his holy precepts and example ; and for the hope of eternal life to all who believe

and obey him. Oh that our souls may be sincerely humbled under a sense of our many transgressions and neglects of duty ; under the recollection of resolutions unfulfilled, of warnings unheeded, of talents unimproved ! We pray not only for mercy to pardon our sins, but for strength to enable us to subdue them, and for grace to help in the day of temptation. Sanctify our understanding, that we may rightly conceive Thy holy truths, and fully apprehend them. Sanctify our will, that it may bend itself to Thy blessed will in all things. Sanctify our affections, that we may set our heart upon Thee, and desire nothing in comparison with Thee. Sanctify our passions, that they may be purified from all defilement of the flesh and of the spirit. Establish in us a holy disposition, that we may be kept in Thy favour and love, by a persevering continuance in well doing. And may we so pass through things temporal, that finally we lose not the things eternal : through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

SATURDAY MORNING.

ZECHARIAH VI. 12.—Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The Branch, and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord.

THE Messiah was to be the great temple-builder, and to erect that glorious and spiritual house, of which both the old and the new temple were the expressive types.

Christ, the Branch, forms the inward temple in our hearts, like the temple of old, according to the pattern in his own mind. He lays its foundations and builds its walls strong in righteousness. He brings in the ornaments of every lovely grace and harmonizing affection. He lights in it the lamps of heavenly wisdom ; he kindles upon its altar the everlasting fire ; and inflames there those grateful clouds of its incense.

A temple of God implies the residence of God with man ; and the great object of Messiah's manifestation was to bring back God to the soul of man, that thus every man might become God's temple. Thus he is called "Emanuel, God with us." Thus did he ascend on high, and receive gifts for

men, that the Lord God might dwell among them. So the Apostle prays, as for every believer, "that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith."

He, the man whose name is the Branch, even he shall build the temple of the Lord; he shall bring God to man, and fix his residence in the human spirit. He does this by making us sensible of the loss of God, and by fixing in us the fear of everlasting separation; by exposing the vanity that surrounds us, the dark plunge into ruin before us; by exciting the desire after God, the effect of newly returning life;—the language of the soul now is, "I go mourning after Thee; I thirst after Thee in a dry and barren land where no water is;"—by giving that seeking spirit which can rest in nothing but its proper object, God; God in Christ! God lifting up the light of His countenance;—by showing us the only way to the Father;—he does this by aspiring faith. And thus the work is done; the veil is removed, God shines forth, the temple is purged by the sprinkled blood, and filled by the hallowing Spirit. Now man walks with God, calls Him Father, turns to seek Him in the soul, and finds Him there. Now he delights in God; he finds how free is prayer, and how accepted is praise. What hasting to Him for shelter! What a sacred fear of offending Him! Man is now strong in Omnipotence, light in Light, love in Love, pure in Purity, and satisfied in infinite fulness. "Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? There is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." Thus it is that God returns to man; thus that the man whose name is the Branch builds the temple of God.

"DESCEND to thy Jerusalem, O Lord!"

Her faithful children cry with one accord;

Come, ride in triumph on! behold we lay

Our guilty lusts and proud wills in thy way!

Thy road is ready, Lord!—thy paths, made straight,

In longing expectation seem to wait

The consecration of thy beauteous feet;

And hark! Hosannas loud thy footsteps greet!

Welcome, Oh welcome to our hearts, Lord! here

Thou hast a temple too, and as full as dear

As that in Sion, and as full of sin;

How long shall thieves and robbers dwell therein?

Enter and chase them forth, and cleanse the floor!
Destroy their strength, that they may never more
Profane with traffic vile that holy place
Which thou hast chosen, there to set thy face.

And then, if our stiff tongues shall silent be
In praises of thy finished victory,
The temple stones shall cry, and loud repeat
Hosanna! and thy glorious footsteps greet.

PRAYER.

WITH the return of the morning, Thou, O Father, renewest unto us Thy loving kindness. With the return of the morning, it is our wisdom and duty to devote ourselves anew to Thee; and our happiness and privilege, to repose our hope and trust in Thee. Various are the duties which lie before us; many are the snares which beset us; severe may be the trials to which we may be called. Our wisdom is but ignorance: our strength is but weakness. But unto Thee are known our dangers and difficulties; be Thou our present and daily help. May uprightness and integrity preserve us; and our worldly business be pursued under a sense of Thy authority and presence. In the most unbended moments, may we never fall into sin and folly. May we always be able to maintain composure and seriousness of mind, and purity of heart. Endue us with fortitude to resist every temptation. Warm our breasts, in the enjoyment of every blessing, with devout gratitude; and assist us to bear affliction with patience and submission. Suffer not our hearts to indulge any sinful passion, or to entertain any evil thoughts. Help us to look forward to the end of life, and to prepare for it. Assist us to sow the seeds of divine knowledge, of religious wisdom, of increasing holiness, now; that, having sown to the spirit, of the spirit we may reap life everlasting: through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

SATURDAY EVENING.

JOHN XIV. 6.—*I am the way, the truth, and the life.*

JESUS Christ is the only and true way to eternal life. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." His gospel reflects the image of God. It is divine in its origin, free in its

communications, satisfying in its effects, constant in its supplies, active in its operations, merciful in its powers, and glorious in its results. It is a system perfectly adapted to the probationary state of man. It is light to the darkness of reason, peace to the tumult of his conscience, joy to the anguish of his soul, and hope to the gloom of his despondency. Is he guilty?—it presents a sufficient Saviour. Is he polluted?—it opens to him a fountain to cleanse away his sin. Is he alienated from God?—here is a medium of approach, a way of access. Is he the victim of ignorance and error?—here, then, he receives the lessons of a heavenly prophet, and becomes wise to salvation. Does he feel himself the victim of passions, which lead him astray?—here is an example to subdue his passions, to curb his lusts, and to control his will. In every point of view the gospel meets his case. Is he a sinner?—it offers pardon. Is he a debtor?—it presents to him the merciful conditions of his discharge. Is he a captive?—it gives him liberty. Is he an endangered heir of glory?—it restores him to his throne, and constitutes him a king and priest unto God. Is he thirsty?—it is a river of life. Is he weary?—it is a delightful repose. Is he ignorant?—it is a divine instructor. Is he diseased?—it is immortal health and vigour to his soul. Is he dying?—it is eternal life. This is the prevailing character of its proclamations, the general style of its appeal:—"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And whosoever will, let him come and drink of the waters of life freely." "Come unto me, all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

How true are these promises! How uncontrollable the power of the gospel over every one who really receives it! It pierces the conscience; it softens the heart; it purifies the soul. The lover of pleasure hears it, and becomes a lover of God; the thoughtless trifler is struck by it, and, for the first time, begins to reflect and pray; the sensualist, as he listens to its sayings, tears his lusts from his heart; and the man who before loved and served the world, turns his back upon it, and tramples its sins and follies underneath his feet, while he fixes his eyes on heaven. Thus has Christ brought

thousands to righteousness whom the moral law could not have reclaimed ; and thus has he proved his superior glory, by his superior power over the hearts of men.

FATHER ! how shall we adore Thee,
Doubt and fear behind us casting ?
How shall man e'er come before Thee,
Thee all powerful, everlasting ?

Through Thy grace to us frail mortals,
Father, now a way is given ;
Jesus guides us to Thy portals,
Leading man to Thee and heaven.

Wandering oft in error's mazes,
Earth's thick mist and gloom around us ;—
But Thy truth our spirits raises,
Jesus sheds Thy grace around us.

Endless life from Thee is sealed
By our Saviour's love in dying ;
Father, here Thou art revealed,
All our doubts and sorrows flying.

PRAYER.

O THOU Father of mercies and God of all consolation ! we would present unto Thee our humble tribute of praise for Thy glorious declarations to mankind in the Gospel of Thy Son Jesus. Blessed, for ever blessed, be Thy name, O Thou God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that by his resurrection from the dead, Thou hast begotten us again to a lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away ; that we are enabled to look beyond this world of sin, of sorrow, and of death, to a world where all shall be eternally and unchangeably happy, who have here obeyed Thy holy will.— O Heavenly Father, what thanks do we owe Thee for Thy rich and unmerited blessings. May our souls be filled with a lively sense of them, and may we manifest the sincerity of our gratitude, by hearts sincerely devoted to Thy service. May the precious consolations of the Gospel be felt by all who are in distress. May such of our friends as are visited with personal or relative affliction, be enabled to derive from it those supplies of strength and support which their several circumstances require. For those who are confined to the bed of sickness, we pray that they may view Thy hand in all ; and if Thou shouldest in

Thy great goodness, deliver them from their present trial, may they come forth perfected, better prepared to do and to bear Thy will concerning them. But if Thou hast ordained, when nature faints be Thou their support ; may they feel a well grounded hope in Thy acceptance : and in those moments when Thou only canst be their stay, may they possess the best consolations of religion. Where in Thy great mercy Thou hast restored to a prospect of returning health from circumstances of great danger, may Thy mercies be duly felt, and may the life which Thou hast spared, and of those to whom Thou hast spared it, be more devoted to Thy service.— In humble submission to Thy will, we implore for ourselves and those dear to us, health and strength to discharge the duties which Thou hast assigned for us : but above all we pray that we may rightly improve all Thy dispensations, learn to regard even afflictions as merciful, and from the chastizements of Thy hand, become better prepared for that state to which we are all hastening. While we are continued in life, may we be preserved from all real evil ; and may it be our sincere and earnest desire to work the work which Thou hast given us to do, so that when the night of death cometh, we may be prepared to die, and may be owned and approved by Thee when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Every blessing for time and for eternity we supplicate as his disciples, and ascribe unto Thee, his Father and our Father, his God and our God, never-ending praises. Amen.

Fourth Week.

SUNDAY MORNING.

EPHESIANS II. 19.—*Fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.*

IN how many tongues, by what various voices, with what measureless intensity of love, is the name of Christ breathed forth to-day? What cries of penitence, what accents of trust, what plaints of earnest desire, pass away to God! What an awful array of faces that gaze forth into immortality with various looks of terror or of love! The vows and prayers whose millions crowd the gates of mercy, no recording angel could tell, but only the infinite memory of God. Of how glorious a church, then, are we members, when we kneel within the house of God! In how solemn an act do we take our part! With how sublime a brotherhood do we own our fellowship!

But our worship together brings us into yet nobler connexions. It unites us by a chain of closest sympathy with past generations. In our helps to faith and devotion in that holy place, we avail ourselves of the thought and piety of many extinct ages. We reverently read those ancient Scriptures, which have gathered around them the trust, and procured the heart-felt repose, of so many tribes and periods, since prophets and apostles first gave them forth. We sing the hymns which a goodly company of pious men have left as the record of their communion with Heaven. And it is impossible to look at the consecrated names of those "sweet singers" of Christendom, without feeling ennobled by their communion, and even astonished at our sympathy with them. Do not we, the living, take up, in adoration and prayer.

the thoughts of the dead, and feel them divinely true? Do they not come forth, as if fresh coined from our own hearts? Indeed, could we ourselves so faithfully utter the consciousness of our inner being, or shape so interpreting a voice for our secret life? What an impressive testimony this to the sameness of our nature through every age, and the immortal perseverance of its holier affections! The language of *their* confessions, their struggles, their desires, speaks our own; the light that gladdened them, shines now upon our hearts; and the mists they could not penetrate, brood now upon our path. There is the choice minstrel of Israel, true alike to the spirit of mourning or of joy; there are the venerable fathers of the ancient church, whose vespers, chanted centuries ago, will suit this night as well; there is the adamant, yet genial Luther, telling, with the severity of an eye witness, the awfulness of judgment; there is the noble Milton, breathing his sweet and rugged music out of darkness; there is the afflicted Cowper, sending out the tenderest strains from his benighted spirit; with an attendant multitude of the faithful,—the confessor, the exile, the missionary,—a chorus of sublime voices, with which it is a sacred privilege to be in harmony. And these are not merely the accents of the past, but the anthem of the sainted dead,—the strains of immortals that look back upon their toils, and behold us singing their songs of sadness here, while they have already learned the melodies of everlasting joy. Blessed communion of earth with Heaven!—making us truly one family, below, above; and rendering us fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the very household of God!

And soon we, too, shall drop the note of earthly aspiration, and join that upper anthem of diviner love. The hour cometh, when we shall cease the mournful cry with which earth must ever pray to Heaven, and grief ask pity to its tears, and the tempted call for help in the crisis of danger, and the labouring will implore a freshened strength. Exiles as yet from the spirit of unanxious joy, we catch but the echoes of that heavenly peace, and yield response but faint and low. Yet even now the free heart of the happy and triumphant shall be ours, in proportion as we are true to the condition of *faithful service*, which alone can make us one with them. The communion of saints brings to us their

conflicts first, their blessings afterwards ; those who will not with much patience strive with the evil, can have no dear fellowship with the good ; we must weep their tears, ere we can win their peace. This sorrowful condition once accepted, the sympathies of heaven are not slow to rise within the soul : it is the tension of sacred toil, that on the touch of every breath of life brings music from the chords of love. And then the tone that *here* sinks in the silence of death, shall *there* swell into an immortal's fuller praise. We shall leave it to others to take up the supplicating strain ; shall join the emancipated brotherhood of the departed ; and, in our turn, look down on the outstretched hands of our children, waiting our welcome and embrace. Oh ! may the Great Father, in his own fit time, unite in one the parted family of heaven and earth !

HALLELUJAH ! best and sweetest
 Of the hymns of praise above !
 Hallelujah ! thou repeatest,
 Angel-host, these notes of love :
 This ye utter,
 While your golden harps ye move.
 Hallelujah ! church victorious
 Join the concert of the sky ;
 Hallelujah ! bright and glorious,
 Lift, ye saints, this strain on high !
 We, poor exiles,
 Join not yet your melody.
 Hallelujah ! strains of gladness
 Comfort not the faint and worn :
 Hallelujah ! sounds of sadness
 Best become the heart forlorn :
 Our offences
 We with bitter tears must mourn.
 But our earnest supplication,
 Holy God ! we raise to Thee ;
 Visit us with Thy salvation,
 Make us all Thy peace to see !
 Hallelujah !
 Ours at length this strain shall be.

PRAYER.

FATHER of holiness and truth ! Thou didst close our eyes on the toil and sorrow of the week past ; Thou hast refreshed our bodies and our spirits with peaceful rest ; and now Thou awakenest us to the day of earthly rest and heaven-

ly toil, to the day of peace from worldly cares and of strife with our own hearts, to the day when Thou invitest us to listen to Thine own voice speaking solemnly in the gospel of Thy Son. Speak to our hearts, O Father, in the silent teachings of Thy Spirit; and rouse our souls to earnest purpose, and to contrite submission. Draw the veil of faith and hope over the glaring pressure of immediate interests; make us feel the realities of the heavenly state; and be filled with longing after the treasures at Thy right hand. Make us to accept willingly the strife of duty; and lowly to bend with humbled spirits before Thy fatherly corrections. Suffer us not to lose the warmth of our dear love to the departed; but may our longing for the blessed re-union quicken us in the times of fierce temptation, and in the dangerous periods of the soul's tired sleep. O Father, help us in our watch, lest we carelessly sink into perdition. Let the words of Christ this day renew our life; and let the waters from the eternal fountain cheer our hearts. Now break to us the bread of heaven; and in the strength thereof, let us endure the conflicts of the coming week. And when weeks and years are over, may we, and all our dearly beloved ones, be united in the eternal Sabbath of Thy love, through the Redeemer, Jesus. Amen. So be it, for Thine own Name's sake.

SUNDAY EVENING.

LUKE XXIV. 32.—*And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?*

It was the evening after our Lord's resurrection, when two disciples were walking to Emmaus. They left behind them the great city, the holiness of which seemed to have departed, and with whose festive sounds they could not sympathize. They did not even seek those who had followed their Lord with them. He was gone; and the tidings the women brought, that he was risen, seemed to them but as an idle tale, awakening them more sensibly to the reality of their loss. They communed together and reasoned; and as they walked they were sad; when Jesus appeared to them, but either in another form (Mark xvi. 12), or their eyes were

holden ; for they knew him not. He enquires the cause of their grief ; he gently rebukes them for their faithlessness, and opens to them the scriptures. Still they were unconscious of his presence, though he spake as never man spake, till, as he sat at their table, he took bread and blessed, and brake, and gave unto them. The tones of heavenly blessing reminded them of the times when they had before beheld him breaking and distributing that good gift of God, which was a faint emblem of himself ; and their eyes were opened and they knew him, but only to behold him depart ; and they said one to another, " Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures ? "

The hearts of the disciples burned, when they were with their Lord whom they loved ; so may ours, for he has not deserted us. They had just been thinking and speaking of him, before he met them ; let us, in like manner, invite his presence into our hearts. And as we walk in the way of life, which is often a sad one, his spirit shall open to us the mysterious page of God's dealings ; the hand writing in the books of nature and of grace shall no more appear unknown characters : he shall commune with us of light, and life, and love ; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough place shall be smooth ; all things shall become new ; our hearts will burn within us ; all selfishness and distrust shall be consumed ; and the best emotions of the soul shall be kindled into a sacrifice acceptable to God. We shall no more be slow of heart to believe ; and when our rapturous musings shall have ceased, and the glow of heavenly joy shall for a time have cooled, we shall yet return to our Jerusalem with hearts purified by the refiner's fire, and gladdened by the divine presence : and we shall be enabled to declare to our fellow disciples the loving kindness of the Lord.

HATH not thy heart within thee burned
At evening's calm and holy hour,
As if its inmost depths discerned
The presence of a loftier power ?

Hast thou not heard, 'mid forest glades,
While ancient rivers murmured by,
A voice from forth the eternal shades,
That spake a present Deity ?

And as, upon the sacred page,
 Thy eye in rapt attention turned
 O'er records of a holier age,
 Hath not thy heart within thee burned ?

It was the voice of God, that spake
 In silence to thy silent heart,—
 And bade each worthier thought awake,
 And every dream of earth depart.

As they who once with Jesus trod,
 With kindling breast his accents heard,
 But knew not that the Son of God
 Was uttering every burning word ;—

Father of Jesus ! thus Thy voice
 Speaks to our heart in tones divine ;
 Our spirits tremble and rejoice,
 But know not that the voice is Thine.

Still be Thy hallowed accents near !
 To doubt and passion whisper peace ;
 Direct us on our journey here,
 Then bid, in heaven, our wanderings cease.

PRAYER.

How often, blessed Father, hast Thou spoken unto us, and we knew Thee not ! In how many voices hast Thou called to us, and we have not obeyed ! At how many times hast Thou been very near unto us, when we knew not Thee ! How often have we cried, in longing helplessness and in bitter sorrow, as though Thou hadst for ever forsaken us ; and lo ! Thou wert in our midst, and wert sending the very things which hid Thee from us ! Thy ways, Father, are not as our ways. Therefore we will fully trust Thy love ; for our own ways we love not ; we feel that they are laid in vanity and ignorance and weakness and iniquity, and end in shame and sorrow. Open our eyes, we pray Thee, that we may see Thy presence, and trust Thy wisdom and Thy love. This day we have felt Thee with us ; the thought of heaven has been present to our souls ; the words of peace have calmed our troubled spirits ; and the voice of duty we have heard, and welcomed Thy inward call. Depart not from us, O Thou that ever art the same. Let not the slumbers of this night work forgetfulness of the hopes and resolutions of the day. Let not the cares of daily toil drive from our

breasts the cares of heavenly concern. Let not the Sabbath hours be the only times of felt communion. But let our hearts burn with holy zeal and pure affection ; so that in all times we may serve Thee, and each day feel the peace of heavenly trust, and the joy of glad obedience to Thy will. Take care of all whom Thou hast united to us in the bonds of love ; and be with us evermore, through our risen and glorified Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

MONDAY MORNING.

JOHN V. 22. *For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.*

HOW greatly does this appointment manifest the compassion of God ! ‘Mercy belongeth unto Thee, O Lord ; because Thou renderest unto every man according to his works.’ Rich indeed that mercy, which began with the mission of the Saviour, and is consummated in the gracious tenderness of the judgment seat ! What an aggravation to the sin of that man, who can still go on, hardening himself in sin ! and who will carry nothing but corrupt and obstinate disobedience to the presence of eternal love !

In consequence of this appointment to judge the world, it becomes our duty to render to our Saviour the reverence, submission and confidence which appertains to the great Sovereign in whose name he acts. This he himself claims ; “that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father.” The honours which belong to the prince are demanded for his ambassador. The Lord said, “They who receive you receive me ; and they who receive me, receive him that sent me.” “God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name ; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess him to be Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” This is one appointed test of devotion to God. A right spirit of subjection and submission to Him, will necessarily be manifested by confidence, faith and trust in him whom He has commissioned—to refuse which, is an evidence of disrespect towards the Sovereign himself.

If then Christ is to sit on the judgment seat, we are to stand before it, and give account of every work which we have done, and of every secret thought, whether it be good or whether it be evil. For that day we are to prepare. The thought of it should have influence over the whole frame of our minds, and the entire character of our lives. It should make sin our abhorrence, and holiness our delight. It should excite us to diligence in the work of obedience and faith, that we may be found blameless, and accepted at last. It should lead us to familiar acquaintance with that word according to which our destiny shall be determined, and to the devout performance of every duty it enjoins ; so that we may be welcomed to the joy of our Lord, and not be cast out with the rejected and impenitent. Yet with such an Advocate and Judge, of whom all that we have known has been benevolent, tender and forbearing,—we feel assured that mercy shall reign in the midst of judgment ; that while severity flashes on the criminal, there yet shall be no room for unrelenting wrath ; but every infirmity shall receive compassion, and all possible allowance be made for the weakness of the flesh, and the seductions of the world. Let the timid and desponding disciple be comforted and at peace. Let the tempted and tried, the sorrowing and fearful, give way to no despair. For it is to him, who bore our infirmities and carried our sorrows, who breaks not the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoking flax ; it is to him that judgment has been committed, “because he is the Son of man.”

HEAR, O ye dead, awake, arise !
 The solemn trumpet shakes the skies ;
 The awful Judge is near :
 Angelic guards attend him down ;
 And, flaming round his fiery throne,
 A thousand terrors glare.

Pale guilt looks upwards with amaze ;
 She trembles while the terrors blaze,
 And conscience tells her doom :
 Struck with unutterable dread,
 The sinner fain would hide his head,
 And shrink into the tomb.

But ye, his happy saints, rejoice !
 No terrors hath the Monarch's voice,
 His looks, no frowns for you ;

He comes, your spirits to convey
To regions of eternal day,
To joys for ever new.

'Blest of my Father ! haste,' he cries ;
In joyful triumph mount the skies,
To nobler worlds above :
There shall ye share my blissful sight
And taste the fulness of delight
In my eternal love.'

PRAAYER.

SENSIBLE of our own weakness, we look up unto Thee, our Father, for Thine assistance and blessing. Surrounded as we are by numerous and powerful temptations, which tend to draw off our attention, and to weaken our affections to Thee and duty, we earnestly implore all those aids, which, in the gracious methods of Thy providence, Thou bestowest upon Thy feeble children of mortality. Holy Father, suffer us not in the moment of thoughtlessness to be led astray from the path of Thy commandments. Above all, suffer us not wilfully and intentionally to yield to any temptation to sin. May we never, through sinful confidence in our own powers, place ourselves in the way of trial. May we carefully observe the first inroads of sin, and in no instance think of disobedience to Thy law as otherwise than destructive. O Gracious Father, for those who are totallly forgetful of Thee, who live without attention to the voice of conscience and to the commands of the Gospel, we pray that they may perceive their sins and their danger, and immediately and earnestly endeavour by timely repentance to regain thy forfeited favour. Grant that we may never rest satisfied with anything short of unreserved obedience to Thy holy will. May christian principle take a more full and complete possession of our minds ; and may it become the object of our highest aim to comply with those terms of peace and pardon which are declared to us in the Gospel of Thy Son. O gracious God, preserve us, we entreat Thee, from all influence of evil opinions, evil customs, and evil examples. May we cultivate that lively abhorrence of sin, which will aid in preserving us from its fatal snares ; and may we never forget that the example and conduct of others will furnish no excuse for us, when we appear before Thy holy tribunal.

May we not, through foolish pride, omit the steady employment of those means of duty which we possess. While we pray for holiness, may our exertions be honestly directed to the attainment of it. May we aim to acquire correct views of duty, and in all things learn to submit to its guidance. The hopes which Thou hast set before us to encourage our feeble endeavours, the gracious promises which Thou hast made so faithful, though imperfect obedience, claim our heartfelt praise; but, O our Father, impress upon our minds a lively apprehension of those destructive consequences of sin which Jesus has pointed out to our fears. Unseduced by the allurements of interest or of pleasure, may we shun the broad path which leadeth to destruction; and having chosen the good part, may we be finally owned by our great Master as his faithful servants. Grant these best of blessings, Heavenly Father, which we supplicate as the disciples of thy well-beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

MONDAY EVENING.

PSALM CXXXI. 2.—*Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother; my soul is even as a weaned child.*

IN weanedness of soul there is presupposed a power in it of still loving and desiring. It is not the destruction of its appetite, but the controlling and changing of it. "A weaned child" still hungers, but it hungers no more after the food that once delighted it;—it is quiet without it;—it can feed on other things. And so with a soul that is weaned from the world; it still pants as much as ever for food and happiness, but it no longer seeks them alone in earthly objects. It has other resources. There is nothing in the world that it feels *necessary* for its happiness. This thing it loves, and that thing it values; but it knows it can do without them; and it is ready to do without them, just *whenever God pleases*. Nor let it be supposed we speak of things *evil* in their nature only, or of certain questionable pleasures and indulgences. Far from this;—we speak of all things worldly, be they good or be they bad. Money, business, honour, pleasure,

affection, friends, relations, children,—*every* thing of earthly kind that the hungry heart of man ever fed on,—this weanedness of soul can say to them all, “If need be, *let them go*.” It checks the mind in the pursuit of them; it sobers the mind in the enjoyment of them; it prepares the mind to part with them; it quiets the mind when they *are gone*. It enables a man to rejoice in them while he has them, as though he rejoiced not; and weep for them when he loses them, as though he wept not; and, dying daily to the world, to exchange, with comparative serenity, the semblance and the shadow, for the substance and reality, of things “hoped for.” This is the happiness, and this the peace of saints.

Is there, then, any one thing, that you feel you could not *bear* to part with? Or is there any one earthly thing that you feel you *must* obtain?—then you do not possess a weaned soul. Could you give up all you have at God’s call; and, having done so, instead of saying, “There goes all my happiness,” could rather say, though yet with bleeding heart, “I can be *happy still*, my best treasure is yet left?” Oh then your’s is a weaned heart; and, with David, you may say, “I am even as a weaned child.”

QUIET, Lord, my froward heart,
 Make me teachable and mild;
 Upright, simple, free from art,
 Make me as a weaned child;
 From distrust and envy free,
 Pleased with all that pleaseth Thee.
 What Thou shalt to-day provide,
 Let me as a child receive;
 What to-morrow may betide
 Calmly to Thy wisdom leave;
 ’Tis enough that Thou wilt care;
 Why should I the burden bear?
 As a little child relies
 On a care beyond its own;
 Knows he’s neither strong nor wise;
 Fears to stir a step alone;
 Let me thus with Thee abide,
 As my Father, Guard, and Guide.

PRAYER.

OF Thy gift it cometh, O Father, that we are here this evening in peace. Thou hast watched over us, and Thy love hath kept us from harm. We look back on the strug-

gles of the past, and none seem to have been worth the labour, save such as were conflicts with evil. We look back upon its sorrows, and we wonder that they distressed us so, while we grieved but little for the plague of our own hearts. Now, O Father, may we lay ourselves to rest in Thee. Calm the turbulence of our passions ; quiet the throbbings of our hopes ; repress the waywardness of our wills ; direct the motions of our affections ; sanctify the varieties of our lot ; and point our faith and trust steadily to the attainment of Thy enduring favour. Be Thou all in all to us ; and may all things earthly, while we bend them to our growth in grace and to the work of blessing, dwell lightly in our hearts, so that we may readily and even joyfully give up whatever Thou dost ask for. May we seek first Thy kingdom and righteousness ; resting assured that then all things needful shall be added unto us. Father, pardon our past ingratitude and disobedience ; and purify us, whether by Thy gentle or Thy sterner dealings, till we have done Thy will on earth, and Thou removest us to Thine own presence with the redeemed in heaven. Hear us, and accept us through Thy Son, once the Man of sorrows, now our glorified Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.

TUESDAY MORNING.

LUKE X. 21.—*Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, "I thank Thee, O Father."*

MY Father, *I* would thank Thee for all Thy mercies to me.

When the hand of sorrow is upon us, then we are led to Thee as the only comforter ; when dangers encompass us round, we fly to Thee as the only rock of refuge ; when sickness and death are near, we say, "Father, if it be possible, remove this bitter cup from me." But, O my Father, let me not be drawn to seek communion with Thee by affliction only ; let me not offer to Thee only the perplexity and sadness of my soul ; let its joys be shared with Thee ; and when I rejoice in spirit, let my first utterance be, "Father, I thank Thee."

Thou art the giver of every good and perfect gift ; all my springs of comfort and happiness have their source in Thee alone ; and to Thee shall the homage of my praise arise

daily for all my many temporal mercies. But it is when my *spirit* is free from care and sorrow; when its joy is shed around on all; when it gives brightness to gloom, and love to sorrow; when it can in faith spread the beauty of Thy presence over the seeming deformity of the world; when all things then minister to its happiness, as they do at other times to its mourning; it is then, O my Father, that I need not to come to Thee, for I feel that Thou art already with me; that Thou only canst know my happiness, since it proceeds directly from Thee: then, while my lips utter, "Father, I thank Thee," would I offer to Thee the holy sacrifice of a loving and happy soul.

They are blessed moments when my spirit can thus rejoice in my God! They give me a foretaste of that time when all shall be joy unspeakable, and when praise will be the atmosphere of the soul. Shall they pass and leave no trace behind? Sorrow leaves deep marks of its presence, and long tinges, with a sombre hue, the world around. But when I have rejoiced in spirit, shall the holy period vanish for ever? Oh may every hour of blessed communion with God make me more united with Him! May it shed its holy influence over all I think and say and do! May it diffuse a pure light on all things, and make me "rejoice evermore."

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and *all* that is *within* me bless His holy name!

My God! Thy boundless love I praise;
How bright on high its glories blaze,
How sweetly bloom below!
It streams from Thy eternal throne,
Through heaven its joys for ever run,
And o'er the earth they flow.

It robes in cheerful green the ground,
And pours its flowery beauties round,
Whose sweets perfume the gale;
Its bounties richly spread the plain,
The blushing fruit, the golden grain,
And smile on every vale.

But in Thy gospel see it shine
With grace and glory more divine,
Proclaiming sins forgiven;
There Faith, bright cherub, points the way
To realms of everlasting day,
And opens all her heaven.

Then let the love that makes me blest,
With cheerful praise inspire my breast,
And ardent gratitude ;
And all my thoughts and passions tend
To Thee, my Father and my Friend,
My soul's eternal good.

Dart from Thine own celestial flame
One vivid beam, to warm my frame
With kindred energy ;
Mark Thine own image on my mind,
And teach me to be good and kind,
And love and bless like Thee.

PRAYER.

FATHER of eternal blessedness ! Thou art always doing us good. Thou grantest us health and strength. Thou givest us food and raiment. Thou supportest us in difficulties, and guidest us in the times of danger and of sorrow. Thou delightest to load us with Thy benefits : Thou art always showering down Thy favours upon us in rich profusion : Thou openest Thy hand, and all creatures are filled with good. What shall we render unto Thee for all Thy mercies unto us ? Thou desirest not outward sacrifices, else would we give them. Thou dwellest in the heaven of love, and purity, and truth, and power. Thou delightest in the meek and lowly, the humble and the contrite. Thou lovest to hear the cry of penitence, and the aspirations of the purest hopes, and the earnest prayer for light and holiness. Thou listenest to the supplication of those, who would love Thee with a child-like love, and trust in Thee with a confiding faith.—Father ! may we never quench the manifestations of Thy Spirit within us : may we never resist the strivings of Thy grace : but may we cherish the promptings of our souls, and nurture every holy aspiration as our choicest treasure.—Blessed be Thy name that here we have no continuing city, but that Thou hast made us strangers and pilgrims upon earth. May our treasure be in heaven, and there may our hearts be also. May our whole life here be a preparation for that happy state, where sin and sorrow and suffering and death shall be known no more for ever. Hear us, as disciples of our ever blessed Redeemer, Jesus Christ the righteous. Amen.

TUESDAY EVENING.

GENESIS XLII. 36.—*All these things are against me.*

THIS is the hasty and wrong conclusion which we often draw from distressing and mournful events. Many indulge themselves in a fearful and repining temper, till it grows into a habit. It is an evil, to be guarded against with the utmost care.

Such language and such a spirit show ingratitude to God, who has bestowed on us so many mercies, and has continued them so long. He might have recalled them before. He might have never given them to be enjoyed by us a moment.

Such repinings manifest ignorance of the law of our being ; of the state of trial and discipline in which we are placed, and of the uncertain tenure by which we hold every earthly blessing.

They show unreasonableness ; to imagine that because we once had a thing, we must always have it ; and distrust in God's providence, promises, and goodness.

They imply that we know what is best for us ; and that our happiness depends on the possession of certain things which we have lost, or are expecting to lose. Men often think God their enemy, when he is especially their friend. They take a partial view of His ways, and put a wrong construction on His dealings towards them. The trials and sufferings they meet, may be so used as to be reckoned among their greatest mercies. Let us make such a wise and pious use of our trials and sufferings ! May earthly disappointment nourish heavenly hope, and temporal losses be supplied by eternal gain.

Were all these things against Jacob ? No. Open to the passage, and behold and admire the divine Providence ! It was all a scheme of mercy and salvation. Oh, love the Lord, and trust Him at all times ; and thou shalt lack nothing which is essential to thy glory and happiness. Let us devote ourselves wholly to God in a pious and an obedient life. Let our confidence suppress every rising and anxious fear. Let our filial love overcome our despondency and doubt. Let our faith be so clear, strong, and steadfast, that it shall guide and support us in the most perplexed,

difficult, and trying scenes of life ; that it shall illumine our way in the darkest dispensations of Providence.

And to quicken us to the performance of these duties, let us consider how miserable we make ourselves, when we neglect them ; when we forget, distrust, and disobey God. We are all liable to disappointments, and to various afflictions. Though we have health, it may be impaired. Diseases may fasten upon us, and break down our strength. Though we have much goods, they may, in numberless ways, be taken from us. Though we have friends, relatives, and children, we know that we are liable to be separated from them any moment. We very well know that we are exposed to these evils, and that more or less of them will be our portion, if we continue long in this probationary state. We know also that at such seasons, we shall need the aids, and consolations of religion. If we are believing and practical Christians, troubles will not come upon us unprepared ; and when they do come, they will not destroy our peace and comfort.

I say not, "Shield me, Father, from distress,"
 But, "Wake my heart to truth and holiness."
 I ask not that my earthly course may run
 Cloudless—but, humbly, "Let Thy will be done."
 The peace the world can give not nor destroy,
 The love which is the greatest, and the joy
 That's given to angels—to perceive and own
 That all Thy will is light and truth alone
 And bliss-producing ;—these, and such as these,
 Be mine ;—the vain world's fleeting vanities—
 Poms, pleasures, riches, honours, glory, pride,
 (Idols by man's perverseness deified.)
 I envy not.—Do Thou my steps controul—
 Erect devotion's temple in my soul ;
 And there, my God ! my King ! unrivalled sway :
 So let existence, like a sabbath day,
 Glide softly by ; and let that temple be
 A shrine devoted all to truth and Thee.

PRAYER.

FATHER, we thank Thee, and we take courage from the manifestations of Thy love. In the dread hour of remorse and anguish, forsake us not, O God most merciful ; but speak unto us the blessed words of reconciliation and of peace. When our mind sickens at the remembrance of the past ; when

we behold the breach that we have made which separateth between us and Thee; when we feel that we have lost the privileges of sons, and hardly dare to become Thy servants; in this dread hour, O God, forsake us not. When hope has deserted us, and even destroyed our faith, oh let love forsake us not; let it bring a gentle calmness to the soul; let it rouse up all that is holy that lay dormant within us; let it draw us insensibly nearer Thee; let it renew our blighted faith; let it again kindle our humble confidence; and then, aided by these divine energies, may it conduct us heavenward, and lead us, the children of penitence, before our Father's feet. And whether we mourn for the past, or seek guidance for the future; whether we fancy ourselves strong, or feel our weakness; whether we rejoice in the glorious liberty of the Sons of God, or find the thralldom of sin still powerful over us; whether our course be easy, or burdened with afflictions and trials, O God, forsake us not; for Thou only canst help us; Thou only art the object of our hopes, the spring of our consolation. Unto Thee do we commit the keeping of our souls, as unto a faithful Creator, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

WEDNESDAY MORNING.

PSALM IV. 6.— *There be many who say, 'Who will show us any good?' Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us.*

HOW full and complete is the answer contained in this invocation, to repinings at our lot! Only let the light of the Lord's countenance be lifted up upon us, only let us see God in all things, and all things in God, and then we shall never be tempted to say, Who will show us any good? Life will be full of good; blessings will glitter out from the recesses and bye paths of our condition, which before lay hidden in shadow; and our contentment, submission, and cheerfulness will be the practical answer to those who may persist in saying, Who will show us any good? The prayer is not, Lord shew us, or give us good; but, Lift up the light of Thy countenance upon us. The good already given, already existing, will then show itself, will glow all

around us under that copious and hallowed light; and our countenances will reflect the beams which shine from the countenance of God.

Come then, ye doubtful and ye disconsolate, come and let us look upon the scene of life, as it lies spread out in the light of a present Deity. God is there, and in His light we shall see light. Let us look upon the human condition as a condition which He has appointed; on human affections, as implanted by Him, and struggling after Him; on human sorrows, as sent by Him that they may lead weak and wandering souls forward and up to Him; and on this world of human creatures, with all their joys and grief, pursuits and interests, as passing away indeed, but passing away under His eye, that it may pass into a state more exalted and enduring. Let us look thus upon life and the world, and we shall not ask, Who will show us any good? but we shall exclaim, It is all good!

Let us look on the low places of poverty, if those low places have the light of God's countenance upon them, and we shall see industry bringing health and contentment; and self denial educating the soul; and privations borne with a patience which assures the mind at once of its own strength, and of a strength greater than its own. He shall see more thankfulness expressed for a little, than we often see elsewhere rendered for an over abundance; and more aid imparted from that little, than we often see elsewhere doled out from hoards.—And we call this good.

Let us look into the chamber of sickness. Pain is there, but in the divine light we behold it engaged in a holy and blessed ministry, subduing and softening the spirit, and clearing away the films from the spirit's eyes. The body is emaciated, but the soul is enlarged. The corporeal powers and functions are disorganized; but the mental powers are in orderly and harmonious action, as resting quietly upon God. And friendship and love are there, with more touching loveliness than they ever wore in gayer scenes; watching night after night, yet feeling no want of sleep; pouring out attentions like unvalued water, which yet could not be bought with gold; hanging, as if with their own existence, on every variation of symptom or pulse in the beloved, and

yet resigning the event to supreme Wisdom. These things are there, and are they not good?

And even the abode of death, why is it not dark with unbroken darkness? Because the light of God's countenance is there, dispersing the darkness. Death is there; but in the light of the loving God, what is death? The end of toil, the completion of the appointed task, the winning of the race, the rest after the battle, the passage into eternal life. Death is there; but so is the victory in which it is swallowed up.

There is good where the light of God's countenance is not, and where God's word declares, as well as man's experience, that good cannot be. If we would find good, if we are simply and honestly seeking it, there is one simple rule to guide us to the object of our searchings. We must look for the pure shinings of that light; and, instead of idly and querulously asking, Who will show us any good? we must humbly ask that the light may be lifted up upon us; and then all will be enlightened, and all will be good.

I'M but a stranger here, Heaven is my home :
Earth has its deserts drear, Heaven is my home.

Danger and sorrow stand
Round me on every hand ;
Heaven is my fatherland :—Heaven is my home.

What though the tempests rage, Heaven is my home :
Short is my pilgrimage : Heaven is my home.

And time's wild wintry blast
Soon will be overpast :
I shall reach home at last : Heaven is my home.

There at my Saviour's side,—Heaven is my home :
May I be glorified !—Heaven is my home.

There with the good and blest,
Those I love most and best,
May I for ever rest ! Heaven is my home.

Therefore I'll murmur not, Heaven is my home :
Whate'er my earthly lot ; Heaven is my home :

If only I may stand
There at my Lord's right hand.
Heaven is my fatherland : Heaven is my home.

PRAYER.

MERCIFUL Father ! We have been ungrateful children to Thee. We have followed the desires of our own hearts, without purifying them by Thy holy word. We have loved

the world, not because Thou wert in it, and it was filled with the proofs of Thy kindness, and the tokens of Thy wisdom ; but because of the wickedness that was in it, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. We have shut ourselves up in our own selfishness, and been enslaved to our own evil passions. O holy Father ! cast us not off, we entreat Thee ; leave us not unto ourselves ; suffer us not to live without Thee in the world ; permit us not to lose the noble gifts that Thou offerest unto those that love Thee, nor the rich delight that is to be found in serving Thee. But draw us unto Thyself by the inspiration of Thy Spirit. Cleanse us from the defilements of our hearts by the lovely outpourings of Thy heavenly grace. Make Thyself known unto us, as indeed Thou art, Light, Life and Holiness ; Purity, Truth and Love ; our Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier ; our Preserver, Friend and Father. Thou art indeed our Father. Who hath loved us as Thou hast ? Who would have borne from us what Thou hast endured ? Who else but Thou, would not have cast us off for our great unworthiness, and despised us for our sinful, weak and ignorant state ? But Thou art rich in long-suffering mercy ; Thou art full of the tenderest compassion ; Thou art kind even to the unthankful and the evil. Lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us, and we shall be enlightened ; refresh us with the living waters of Thy truth, and we shall be purified. Make Thyself very nigh unto us, that we may feel Thy presence and Thy love. And in Thy good time, O Father, may we feel Thy presence more, and enjoy Thy love for ever, in the kingdom of the Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

WEDNESDAY EVENING.

MARK XI. 11.—*And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple : and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.*

WHAT a moment was that, full of thoughts too great for utterance ! What a glance did Jesus give on the scene of his future sufferings !

The *morning* had seen him *apparently* in all the exultation of approaching triumph ; the lowly Jesus, the carpenter's

son, had entered the proud capital of his nation as a conqueror ; he had, indeed, conquered all hearts which were not already enchained by sin and prejudice. The disciples began to praise God with a loud voice : they that went before, and they that followed, cried, "Hosanna !" and all the city of Jerusalem was moved, when the multitude exclaimed, "This is Jesus, the prophet of Galilee !" The Temple, too, was the scene of similar joy and excitement, though the Chief Priests and Scribes vainly attempted to check it. The blind and lame were brought to him in the holy place to be healed, and the glad voices of the children resounded through its magnificent porticoes, "Hosanna to the Son of David !"

Yet Jesus had heard in this general rejoicing only the sad echoes of approaching lamentation. When he drew nigh to the city, now glorious and beautiful on its hills, with the Temple shining gorgeously before him, and its people preparing for their solemn festivity, he knew that ere long all would be levelled with the ground, and he wept over it.

But now *evening* was come ; the hour of prayer had given a holy stillness to the scene, and from the Temple he looked round about upon all things. Within a few short days all would be changed. The voices of those that loved him would be silent ; only the cries of, "Away with him," would be heard ; and into this very temple would he be led in mock solemnity before the council of his enemies. Then the dark, dreadful scenes which would succeed must have risen up before him, perhaps for a time obscuring the glory that would follow.—But it is almost presumptuous even to attempt to realize what were then the Saviour's emotions.

When he had seen all, the eventide being now come, he withdrew with the twelve to his peaceful home at Bethany, where were those who loved him, and whom he loved. There we may follow him in the sacred recesses of our hearts ; but what words could, without the aid of inspiration, venture to express what were the holy meditations of the Son of God ?

Go to dark Gethsemane,
Ye that feel the tempter's power :
Your Redeemer's conflict see ;
Watch with him one bitter hour :
Turn not from his griefs away ;
Learn of Jesus Christ to pray.

Follow to the Judgment Hall ;
 View the Lord of life arraigned ;
 Oh the wormwood and the gall !
 Oh the pangs his soul sustained !
 Shun not suffering, shame, or loss ;
 Learn of him to bear the cross.
 Calvary's mournful mountain climb ;
 There, submissive at his feet,
 Mark that miracle of time,
 Love's own sacrifice complete :
 " It is finished," hear him cry ;
 Learn of Jesus Christ to die.
 Early hasten to the tomb,
 Where they laid his breathless clay !
 All is solitude and gloom ;
 Who hath taken him away ?
 Christ is ris'n ; he seeks the skies !
 Thither learn of him to rise.

PRAYER.

THOU, O Father, drawest yet more nigh unto us, when we feel the emptiness of this world. In the time when all things go smoothly with us, and our occupations flow in the accustomed channel, then we are too apt to forget Thee, who art the Author of our peace. But in the time of fierce conflict and of difficulty, then our weakness and our ignorance drive us unto Thee : and Thou, most compassionate One, dost not upbraid us for our unconcern, but givest us the direction which we need. Now, Father, we would look round upon all the events of the day past. Wherein we find that we have sinned, we crave Thy pardon. Wherein unknowingly we have fallen, guide and sustain us. Wherein our hearts have quailed in fear, now may we take calm confidence. Wherein we have rejoiced at appearances, may we rejoice with trembling, since we know not what these things mean.— And the cares, and the sorrows, and the toils, and the evils of the day are past : and Thou gatherest us together from our work-places in Thy vineyard, and givest us the sweets of family affection, and unitest us unto our dearest ones. Father ! with humble hope we look forward to that best of gatherings hereafter. There are many places here that are desolate : but there, no parting comes. Now we part from one another, and we go to rest. Be with us, Father ; and, whether on earth or in heaven, may we wake to do Thy will, even as the Saviour did. Amen.

THURSDAY MORNING.

I CORINTHIANS II. 12. * * *The Spirit which is from God.*

WHEN we find the flesh warring against the spirit ; when evil habit that we thought had long been broken, turbulently cries out for gratification ; when bitter disappointment and contempt are poured upon us, and the arm of flesh, on which we leaned more than we were aware, drops from under us ; when the world looks coldly upon us, and our sympathy, that we sent forth to find a resting place among the flood-waters of human passion, returns to our heart again, and finds no other ark of refuge ; when carelessness and spiritual coldness and sin and death are stealing their silent marches upon us, and surprize us with their presence even in the midst of our holy things ;—then, what can save us from despair but the promise that God will give His Holy Spirit to those who ask it ; what will keep the oil of trust still burning, flickering though it be, but the daily and hourly supplies of grace, that the Father freely grants unto His children ?

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God. It doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that when he who is our life shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

See with what delight christians can now go on their way rejoicing ! The young, who exult in their vigour, and set forth as strong men to run the race, feel a solemn joy when they say “Truly this life is sweet, and full of blissful hopes ; but that life is far sweeter, and its hopes can never fail.” And they go to their duties with a determined principle that guides and directs their exuberant activity, and cools the fever of ungoverned impulse.

Those in riper manhood, immersed in the occupations of life, sigh at the hopes of youth ; for once they indulged in them, and they are gone. They count not on earthly good, for they have found it pass away. They centre not their heart's affections on human objects, for they have been cut off from around them. But they remember heaven ; and

the sun breaks from behind the clouds, and tinges the dull objects of sense with glory ; and with a new life they exclaim, " Truly it is a sweet thing to live, and the path of duty is pleasant : but it is the sun of righteousness that cheers our course ; and there, there shall be light without a cloud."

Some there are who are tottering on the brink of the tomb. One by one, their senses decay. Disease consumes the body, and a twilight gloom is creeping over their minds. We say, " Here is the wreck of human nature." Nay, here is its greatest glory. Speak to them of heaven ; and the vacant countenance is lighted up with angelic radiance ; the hands are lifted in devout thankfulness and fervent prayer ; and they know that when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, they have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

These are "the things that are freely given to us of God."

SORROW and darkness fled away,
And I beheld eternal day !
 No night was ever there ;—
None feebly drew the parting breath,
Gained was the victory over death,
 And *life* was ever there.

I felt as ne'er I had before,
I knew that I should sin no more ;—
 And straight within my soul
There was a calm and holy peace,
A joy so true it ne'er *could* cease,
 A gentle, sweet controul.

I knew that I was with my God,
Yet feared I not His chast'ning rod,
 Fear dwelleth not with love ;—
I felt His presence ever nigh,
'Twas bliss to live beneath His eye.
 I was in heaven above !

I was so filled with holy awe,
I nothing heard and nothing saw ;—
 Yet every power and thought
Was bent on that excess of light,
Absorbed in fulness of delight,
 In Him whose face I sought.

But then a mortal veil was thrown
Upon me, and I was alone !

My course was still to run.
I came from realms of endless day,
To see the dim and troubled ray
Of the earth's mid-day sun.

But yet, methought, a fairer glow
Was shed on all things here below,—

Light from above was given.
My Father's love dispelled the gloom,
And made the Valley of the Tomb
Appear the Gate of Heaven.

PRAYER.

Most merciful and kind Father ! We thank Thee for the refreshing sleep which Thou hast given us. May our thoughts always tend towards Thee, looking to Thee as the giver of every good thing, and as our guardian and upholder in the time of temptation and of trouble. Let us not, O Father, be satisfied with ourselves ; but let each of us ask of Thee, "What lack I yet ?" May our souls be filled with a lively sense of those blessings which Thou hast so abundantly poured down from heaven upon us. We know, O God, that Thine eye is always upon us, and yet we have dared to sin. Oh forgive whatever we have done amiss, and incline our hearts to better obedience. Keep our consciences tender, and ready to warn us of what is wrong. May we do nothing that we should be ashamed to own to Thee, or to our fellow men ; but go on steadily in the right way. Especially may we be watchful to discern the first signs of a sinful heart, and come back to Thee with quick repentance. Bless all that are dear unto us, and keep them in Thy holy paths. Hear us, we entreat Thee, through Jesus Christ, our ever blessed Redeemer. Amen.

THURSDAY EVENING.

JOHN XIII. 31.—*Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him."*

THE great struggle was over ! The Son of Man *had* shown forth his Heavenly Father's glory by his whole life ;—he who had been called, by a voice from heaven, the beloved Son of God, had not been called so in vain, for by him the Spirit of

God had been manifested in the flesh. Long had he been contemplating the final trial of his filial obedience, and he had, as the time approached, steadfastly set his face to go up to Jerusalem ;—the death which he must accomplish at that city, had been before him on the Holy Mount, when he had a slight foretaste of his future glory to support and encourage him ;—the thought of his burial was awakened by the offering of devoted and respectful love ;—and now, before the final consummation of his labours and sufferings, he was sharing, for the last time on earth, the holy paschal supper, with those who had been the chosen companions of his labours. They did not comprehend the thoughts and emotions which then filled his soul, yet they were *faithful* followers ; they were willing, though the flesh was often very weak,—all but one ! That one, less than any of the others, knew the mind that was in his Master ; yet on this occasion there was an awful intelligence between them. Judas was conscious that he was about to deliver up his Lord ; and he perceived that his Lord knew it. “Having received the sop, he straightway went out.”

Now our Saviour appears relieved of a heavy load,—the presence of a traitor ;—now the dreadful step was taken ; for Judas had gone forth to do his work, and *he* had desired him to do it quickly ;—now *he* had been glorified by his willing obedience, and God had been glorified by the devoted submission of him whom He had chosen to be the Saviour of men ; and Jesus felt a firm confidence that since God was glorified by him, his seeming humiliation would be short ; and that God would straightway glorify him. After this critical moment, how freely did he pour forth his thoughts, and hopes, and consolations to his disciples ;—how unrestrainedly did he pray in their presence to his Heavenly Father !

Can we read such passages as these, and not rejoice that he who was to be our Exemplar, was a man of sorrows and of like passions with us, yet without sin ? Can we withhold from him our deep and tender sympathy, under trials which no one of us can be called on to bear in equal intensity ? Can we do otherwise than love him, who thus gave himself for us that we may be cleansed from all iniquity ; and strive to show our love as he directed, by keeping his commandments ?

If love, the noblest, purest, best,—
If truth, all other truths above,
Will claim return from every breast,
Oh ! surely Jesus claims our love.

There's not a hope with comfort fraught,
Triumphant over death and time,
But Jesus mingles in that thought,
Forerunner of our course sublime !

We see him in the daily round
Of social duty, mild and meek ;
With him we tread the hallowed ground,
Communion with our God to seek.

We see his gentle, pitying eye,
When lowly want appeals for aid ;
We hear him in the frequent sigh,
That mourns the waste which sin has made.

We meet him at the lonely tomb ;
We weep where Jesus wept before ;
And there, above the grave's dark gloom,
We see him rise, and weep no more.

PRAYER.

LORD ! how greatly Thou hast glorified us, by making us disciples of Thy Son ! What high honour Thou hast bestowed on us, that Thou hast called us to love and follow Christ ! We take account of all the happiness and the greatness and the pomps of this life ; and we find that they are as chaff which the wind driveth away. We consider the sufferings of this present time ; and we find that they are not worthy to be compared with the glories that shall follow. We enter the narrow portal, and we see the cross and the thorny crown : but Thou hast shed over them a heavenly radiance, and we rejoice if we are counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's sake.—Father ! sanctify unto us our best thoughts, that they may become, not an unwonted feast, but even as our daily bread. May we count it all joy, when we fall into divers trials ; and may they work in us patience ; and patience, experience ; and experience, hope ;—a hope that maketh not ashamed : because Thy love, O Father, is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which Thou hast given to us. And may we be worthy of Thy Holy Spirit of discipline and sorrow. May we, in the days of peace and prosperity, live closely with

Thee, and act as responsible for Thy talents: in order that when the night of sadness comes, we may be prepared to submit ourselves to the lessons of Thy love. Father! we leave our lot with Thee: but oh! may we be purified from sin. Leave us not unto ourselves, we pray Thee; suffer us not to depart from the chamber of holy thought; but in spirit may the Saviour be ever with us, and may his love warm our hearts into devout obedience. Thine may we be in life; Thine in death; Thine at the last great day, and for ever; Thine, through the door of faith, which the good Shepherd hath opened to us in Thy name. Amen.

FRIDAY MORNING.

LUKE XXII. 42.—*Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done.*

OUR Saviour thus permits us, by his example, to pray that the bitter cup may pass from us;—he did so in deep anguish of soul, for he was enduring such intense suffering as, perhaps, no other human being has gone through; and, being in an agony, he prayed yet *more earnestly*; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground. Yet, while supplicating that the trial might be removed, he failed not to add, “Nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done.”

In that moment of deep gloom, our Saviour saw before him his own acute sufferings and death,—the desertion of his chosen friends and their subsequent darkness of soul: yet could he have *fully* discerned beyond the cloud the glory that should follow;—could he have had present to his mind the myriads that, through his sufferings, would be made partakers of that glory; can we imagine that he would have offered the petition, “If Thou be willing, remove this cup from me?” But though the veil of Nature’s weakness dimmed all but his approaching trials, nothing could separate him from his love of his Father, and perfect confidence that His will is best;—his strength was made perfect through weakness.

The sons of men are often, like him who hath passed into the heavens before them, led through a gloomy valley to their eternal home. They groan, being heavily burdened with the weight of the flesh; they weep at the tombs of their best-beloved friends; they lament the misery and wickedness of their fellow-creatures; they are sunk down in the dust by the abasing conviction of their own unworthiness. Yet, if their wills are entirely swallowed up in the will of Him whose will alone is guided by infinite love and wisdom, can they feel more than the momentary gloom which was hallowed by him who was made perfect through suffering? The flesh is very weak,—it clogs our flight heavenward;—yet it is a tabernacle built by Him who is a Spirit,—a shrine in which He has placed a portion of His own divinity; and if the spirit is willing, and strives to unite itself to Him, it will find, that even this clay which seems to impede its flight may help it heavenward; and it will at last discern that all is very good. We weep, and our Saviour wept, when those whom we most love depart; but they are tears of bliss when we unite our wills with God's will, for we know that His good time is best for us and for them; and we thank Him for that love which has manifested as much when He takes, as when He gives. We grieve when we confine our view to the narrow span of time and space around us, and to our own imperfect notions of what is right and good: for we see around, evil which we cannot controul, misery which we cannot soothe; but we rejoice when we "take our stand in the divine nature," and see that all is infinite wisdom and mercy. And when we feel that we are utterly unworthy of the love of all, and a dark cloud hangs over our souls, let us acquiesce, with thankfulness, in a sorrow which our Father sees needful to subdue the pride of our hearts, and still say, "O Father, not my will, but Thine be done."

O glorious hour, when our wills shall be entirely swallowed up in Thine, O Father! When faith shall have had its perfect work! When we shall be one in Thee!

My God, my Father, while I stray
Far from my home, in life's rough way,
Oh teach me from my heart to say,
Thy will be done.

Though dark my path and sad my lot,
 May I be still and murmur not,
 But breathe the prayer divinely taught,
 Thy will be done.

What though in lonely grief I sigh
 For friends once loved no longer nigh,
 Submissive still I would reply,
 Thy will be done.

If Thou shouldst call me to resign
 What most I prize, it ne'er was mine,
 I only yield Thee what was Thine,
 Thy will be done.

Controul my will from day to day :
 Blend it with Thine ; and take away
 All that now makes it hard to say
 Thy will be done.

And when on earth I breathe no more
 The prayer, oft mixed with tears before,
 I'll sing upon a happier shore
 Thy will be done.

PRAYER.

FATHER ! we are very weak indeed, and in Thy will alone is strength. We are lost in the mazes of ignorance and folly, and in Thy will alone is wisdom. We are overwhelmed with the impurity of our spirits, and the sinfulness of our hearts, and the disobedience of our lives ; and Thy law is holy, Thy will is truth and purity itself. Oh when shall we be conformed unto the image of Thy Son ? Shall we ever be delivered from the body of this death, which separates us from Thy holy love and presence ? Lord, Thou knowest. Open to our view the hidden recesses of our souls, that we may see what it is that is rebellious against Thy will. Shew unto us the plague of our own hearts. May we crucify every unholy desire, and every vain love ; may we cast out our bosom sins, whatever they be : may we mortify our members which are of the earth, and bring our bodies under subjection to Thy law ; may we pull down every stronghold of pride, and lead our every thought into the obedience of Christ. Father ! we do not desire that our own wills may be done. We know that they should not be. And if in our weakness and ignorance, we ask for it, withhold from us our entreaties. May Thy will alone be done ; by us and by all men ; in earth as in heaven ; now, as in the future days of Thy felt presence. May it be done cheerfully

and lovingly ; thoughtfully and earnestly ; calmly, and with settled purpose ; in joy, in sorrow ; in health, in sickness ; in the usual concerns of life, and in the unwonted claims of duty ; in life, and in the near prospect of eternity ; even as our Saviour said, ‘ Not our wills but Thine be done ! ’ ‘ Father, into Thy hands we commend our spirits. ’ Amen.

FRIDAY EVENING.

JOHN XI. 12.—*Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.*

[or, Lord, if he be laid to rest, he shall be saved.]

WHEN the mind is exhausted with the efforts it has made to repel physical suffering ; when patience and supporting hope have been well nigh overcome by the protractedness of the struggle ; when, in very weakness of the flesh, the spirit is giving way to the powers of darkness, and faith sorrowfully prepares to take her flight, and love (unheeded in the mental gloom) is silently betaking herself to more congenial abodes : then “ nature’s sweet restorer, balmy sleep ” falleth gently on the sufferer ; the knitted brow and the clenched teeth are relaxed ; the deep furrows of anguish are filled up ; sweet dreams of rest and health hover around the mental vision ; and for a few hours (a’as ! how brief they seem,) all-conquering disease has himself been vanquished.

With what harassing uncertainty do we oftentimes regard the future ! How dark the gloom that hangs over our most cherished prospects ! Sometimes we have to decide on what will affect the whole current of our future lives, or the interests of those most dear to us. All is confusion when we lie down on our beds at night. But we rise in the morning, calm and prepared for thought. Things which before appeared to us insuperable obstacles, now we smile at : points, which seemed so intricate that we could obtain no clue to a decision, now can be unravelled : and with confiding gratitude, we commit our cares to the keeping of our heavenly Father, who has awakened us to renewed proofs of His unceasing love.

In the night watches, the sweet lessons of consolation and trust are oftentimes read to us. Then the veil of sight, which

conceals God and spiritual things from our thoughts, is for a time lifted up ; and our dreams and sleep-wakings are of heavenly things. We commune in silent thought with the departed ; we feel our intimate relation with the ever-present Father ; we are with Jesus on the mountain solitude ; we are in the spirit-land, and, like Paul, are caught up into the heavens ; and we join in the chorus of the angelic choir, "Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth !"

Nor are the visions of the night an idle dream. They are the realities by which, were our faith strong enough, we should daily and hourly live.

"I slept, and dreamed that Life was Beauty.
I woke, and found that Life was Duty.
Was thy dream then a shadowy lie ?
Toil on, sad heart, courageously :
And thou shalt find thy dream to be
A noonday light and truth to thee."

In our most active states, we are constantly undergoing decay and renovation. And what is death, but a more apparent, a more sudden and complete change ? What is it, but a casting aside, at once, of all that is perishable ; and the clothing of the soul in that body that shall be, which is raised in incorruption, in honour, and in power ? The early disciples understood this well. They spoke of their first martyr as falling asleep in Jesus ; and they called the abodes of their dead *cemeteries*, or sleeping places. "Hence death is no longer the king of terrors, with uplifted hand ready to strike the trembling heart : but like an angel at the bed of a slumbering child, fanning it to sleep with a lilly plucked in paradise, and filling the soul with visions of heaven, by blending in brightness before its eyes the sweetest images of earthly beauty and affection."

May it not be that death exercises the same holy and tranquilizing effects on the soul that sleep now does on our bodies ? May it not be that, by the long slumber of the tomb, the spirits of the departed are freed from the harassments and pains of the earthly tabernacle ?

They sleep in Jesus, and are blest ;
How calm their slumbers are !
From suffering and from sin released
And freed from every care !

How is it that we dread for ourselves, and for the objects of our love, God's greatest blessings? How is it that we complain so rashly when our Father shortens the day of toil and pain, and lengthens the night of holy rest; while we scarcely grieve in the time of spiritual inactivity, when the hours of precious opportunity are running past, and leaving a blank behind? Weep not for those who, like the Redeemer, go to their grave bearing the cross of many sorrows: but weep for those who sleep on now and take their rest when the betrayer is at hand. That sleep is the foreshadowing of eternal death.

Truly God giveth unto His beloved sleep. But Jesus, our divine Saviour, He hath awaked and received unto Himself. He is gone to prepare a place for us, that where he is, there we may be also.

INTERVAL of grateful shade,
Welcome to my weary head!
Welcome slumbers to mine eyes,
Tired with glaring vanities!

My great Master still allows
Needful periods of repose;
By my heavenly Father blest,
Thus I give my powers to rest.

Heavenly Father! gracious name!
Night and day His love the same:
Thou, my ever-bounteous God,
Crown'st my days with various good.

Thy kind eye, that cannot sleep,
These defenceless hours shall keep:
Blest vicissitude to me!
Day and night I'm still with Thee.

What though downy slumbers flee,
Strangers to my couch and me!
Sleepless, well I know to rest,
Lodged within my Father's breast.

While the empress of the night,
Scatters mild her silver light;
While the vivid planets stray
Various through their mystic way;

While the stars unnumbered roll
Round the ever-constant pole;
Far above the spangled skies,
All my soul to God shall rise;

'Midst the silence of the night,
Mingling with those angels bright,
Whose harmonious voices raise
Ceaseless love and ceaseless praise ;

Through the throng His gentle ear
Shall my tuneless accents hear :
From on high He doth impart
Secret comfort to my heart.

He, in these serenest hours,
Guides my intellectual powers :
And His Spirit doth diffuse,
Sweeter far than midnight dews :

Lifting all my thoughts above
On the wings of faith and love :
Blest alternative to me,
Thus to sleep, or wake, with Thee !

What if death my sleep invade !
Should I be of death afraid ?
Whilst encircled by Thine arm,
Death may strike, but cannot harm.

Visions brighter than the morn
Greet the deathless spirit born :
See the guardian-angel nigh
Waits to waft my soul on high !

See the flood of sacred light,
Which no more shall yield to night !
Transitory world, farewell !
God invites with him to dwell !

With Thy heavenly presence blest,
Death is life, and labour rest :
Welcome sleep or death to me,
Still secure, for still with Thee !

PRAYER.

FATHER, Source of calm repose, our wearied spirits bless Thee for the curtain of darkness and the leave to rest. How sweet it is, when we feel burdened with the labours of the day, to know that night is coming ! Lord, may the night bring with it nothing but purity and peaceful trust. May our times of wakefulness be hallowed by the thought of Thy presence ; and may our times of sleep be guarded by Thee from evil imaginations. Lord, save us from all the powers of darkness : and may even the night be light about us, because of the glorious confidence of Thy love. We would not dread that sleep of death which Thou hast appointed for us before

we enter on the endless day : but we dread the sleep of sin, when our consciences scarce warn us of ruin, and the holiest motives have no longer power over our wills. Lord, save us from this most terrible of deaths. Keep our hearts tender ; and withdraw not Thy Holy Spirit from us. Even if it be by bitter pangs of remorse and fearful woes, yet shew unto us the plague of our own hearts, and give us rest from sin. Father, our souls are wearied with conflict, as are our bodies with toil. Give us needful repose, we entreat Thee : and let Thy love watch over all dear unto us. And whether we wake in time or in eternity, may it be to serve Thee with a purer love, and a more hearty devotedness, as the disciples of our ever blessed Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.

SATURDAY MORNING.

PHIL. III. 13, 14.—*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended ; but this one thing I do ; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

WHERE is the moment for pausing ? At what hour may the child of God, having such a holy work to do, and such obstacles to hinder him, say to himself, It is enough, I will cease from my labour ? At what age may man, with his eye on his Master, and his hope on heaven, lay down the staff of his pilgrimage, and say, I have attained ; I have reached the stature of my Lord, and my soul may rest from toil ?

Not while it is recorded that the prince of the Apostles,—the inspired, the indefatigable Paul,—felt himself at a distance from perfection, and feared to stop in his attainments. Not while man's life is likened in the gospel to a race ; for he that pauses must lose it. Not while it is called in scripture a warfare ; for he that lays down his arms, or sleeps upon his post, before the warfare is accomplished, suffers for infidelity or treason. Not while sin is in the world, and temptation abounds, and the love of many waxes cold. No : the pilgrimage of toil and duty must go on, while the heart throbs and the pulse beats, without intermission, without fainting,

steadily, resolutely. Through the desert it may be; but God is there, giving water from the rock and meat from heaven; and who, then, will faint at the prospect? In perils and straights it may be; but God is in the midst, with the cloudy pillar of His providence and grace; and who, then, will shrink from the way? Among enemies, in fearful and banded array, it may be; but who will tremble at their power, that is protected by the shield of faith, and armed by the sword of the Spirit, and led toward the promised land by the captain of his salvation? Let the believing pilgrim then go on; without halting, without looking back, without distrust; onward, onward,—till the way-worn feet stand on the borders of the Jordan, and the bright inheritance is seen at hand. Then, as it is written, “the feet of them that bear the ark shall stand still;” then the children of God may rest from their watchings and toils; and having past the dark river, in whose swelling waters the grace of God shall bear them up, they shall go, every one to the place prepared for him from the foundation of the world.

A CHARGE to keep I have,
 A God to glorify;
 A never-dying soul to save,
 And fit it for the sky;
 To serve the present age,
 My calling to fulfil;—
 Oh may it all my powers engage
 To do my Master's will.

Help me to watch and pray,
 And on Thyself rely;
 Assured, if I my trust betray,
 I shall for ever die.
 Arm me with jealous care,
 As in Thy sight to live;
 And oh! Thy servant, Lord, prepare
 A strict account to give.

PRAYER.

FATHER, all perfect, all holy, but all loving! Once more we awake to life and duty: and the sorrowful struggles of our hearts must still go on. Thou hast once more called us to the strife of temptation, and to the eagerness of hopeful interests, and to the gaining of fresh heights of holiness.

Thou hast once more bid us accept the conditions of heavenly blessings. Lord, we feel sometimes weighed down with sadness: for even when we have taken confidence in the peace of trustful service, and have sealed our inheritance, the evil temptations of the past rise up and trouble us; and we flee from them, and reach forth unto those things that are before; but Thou givest us to possess the sins of our youth. Father, we accept whatever discipline Thou appointest for us; but oh! in Thy mercy save us from the deeds of darkness, and the corruptions of our former selves. Lord, we would be new creatures. We desire no partial enjoyment of our former unhallowed ways. Never suffer us to have peace in evil doing. Never allow us to rest on our oars in the dangerous calms of life. Oh create a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within us. Nearer and nearer still, O Father, may each day bring us to our home. In Thy felt presence may all the suggestions of evil be readily overcome. In Thy strength, may we find that we can do all that Thou commandest. And in Thy love, may we find the rich reward of all our strife and sorrow, and the peaceful joy that seals our hope of heaven. Lead us, O Father, thitherward; and Thine shall be the praise for ever, through the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

SATURDAY EVENING.

ACTS I. 9.—*A cloud received him out of their sight.*

WHAT a moment was that! For a time the Apostles would be filled with astonishment and rapture; their thoughts would be carried with Jesus in a sort of ecstasy; but as they silently returned to their home, they would miss the sweetly-solemn tones of him to whom, but a few minutes before, they had reverently listened. He no longer was with them,—the guide, the friend, and the instructor; and their mortal eyes would no more behold him.

Have we ever felt the void when we have lost a friend? Think, then, what it must have been to have lost *Jesus*!

Let us go with them to their "large upper room." Perhaps it was that into which Jesus had entered with his, "Peace be

unto you," as they sat at meat. Perhaps the very chamber in which he ate the last supper with them. They would never see him there again ! Did they give themselves up to selfish grief, or did they strive to lose the sense of their bereavement by unseasonable merriment ? Did they make light of it, and go their way ? No ! In company with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, they continued, with one accord, in prayer and supplication. What a blessing it is when the bereaved know where to go ! Prayer was no novelty to them ! Their Lord had taught them how to pray ; and, when he was gone, they benefit by the lesson. And they continued "of one accord." They are separated from Jesus ; but are drawn more closely to one another. Prayer binds them together. A common object of attachment, Christ, unites them in fellowship ; and so they continue till the day of Pentecost ; when, being of one accord in one place, the Spirit descends upon them ! And now the period of retirement and suspense is ended : ten days seclusion, passed in prayer, in meditation, and in the interchange of brotherly affection, had done its work. The Spirit is poured upon their chastened minds. The Comforter, which their master had promised, brings his words to their remembrance. They are now with him more than ever. He is absent in body, yet they are present with their Lord. They are fully reconciled to his removal. Though now they saw him not, yet believing, they rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. They would not, if they could, call Jesus back again to earth ; they rather longed to rejoin him in heaven.

Have any been removed from us whom we have loved with a holy affection, less only than that which the disciples had for their Lord ? Has a cloud, perhaps to us a *dark* one, received them out of our sight ? May they so dwell with *us* in spirit ;—may they so draw us to them ;—and may our affections be raised from things beneath, to those above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God !

THE hour must come ! — the closest ties
Which bind to earth will severed be ;
To Thee, O God ! we lift our eyes,
And seek our rest in heaven and Thee.

The tears of nature, gracious Lord !
Thou wilt with pitying eye behold ;
And faith in Thine eternal word
Its heavenly prospects will unfold.

The hour will come, when endless day
Shall chase the darkness of the grave ;
Jesus, who trod the gloomy way,
Hath power from death itself to save.

The hour will come,—the closest ties
Which bound on earth shall be renewed ;
When all shall live that sanctifies ;
And all that sullies be subdued.

Then shall we see the loved we leave ;
Rejoin the friends who've gone before
United bliss from Thee receive ;
And dwell with Jesus evermore.

Oh may this cheering prospect guide
In friendship's duties, friendship's joys ;
In faith and love our souls abide,
And follow duty's sacred voice !

PRAYER.

Now, O Father, Thou spreadest the curtain of rest over the worlds in which our bodies and our spirits dwell. Clouds and darkness are around Thy throne : but, blessed be Thy name, mercy and truth go before Thy face. Thy darkness is not the covering of gloom, but the curtain of mercy. Thy clouds are not laden with destructive storms, but are the tokens of Thy loving care. We dread not these clouds : but oh ! how dark are the clouds of sin and the mists of earth, that rise up between us and Thee ! Dear Father, even now, in the night watches, lift up the light of Thy countenance upon us, and give us a peaceful sense of Thy forgiveness and Thy loving care. And then we will not dread to enter the dark valley of the shadow of death : for Thou wilt be with us ; Thy rod and Thy staff will comfort us. And oh ! unite us again to those beloved ones, who now behold the face of Thine eternal day ; and there may we be a happy family in heaven, without a wanderer lost. We offer these our prayers in the name of our ever blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Meditations for Particular Occasions.

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S SUPPER.

REVELATIONS XXII. 17.—*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

ALL Christian people must come. They, indeed, that are in the state of sin, must not come so ; but yet they must come. First they must quit their state of death, and then partake of the bread of life. They that are at enmity with their neighbours, must come ; that is no excuse for their not coming ; only they must not bring their enmity along with them, but leave it, and then come. They that have variety of secular employments must come ; only they must leave their secular thoughts and affections behind them, and then come and converse with God. If any man be well grown in grace, he must needs come, because he is excellently disposed to so holy a feast ; but he that is but in the infancy of piety, had need to come, that so he may grow in grace. The strong must come, lest they become weak ; and the weak, that they may become strong. The sick must come to be cured, the healthful to be preserved. They that have leisure, must come, because they have no excuse ; they that have no leisure, must come hither, that by so excellent religion they may sanctify their business. The penitent sinners must come, that they may be justified ; and they that are justified, that they may be justified still. They that have fears and great reverence for these mysteries, and think no preparation to be sufficient, must receive, that they may learn how to receive the more worthily ; and they that have a less degree of reverence, must come often to

have it heightened; that, as those creatures that live amongst the snows of the mountains, turn white with their food and conversation with such perpetual whitenesses; so our souls may be transformed into the similitude and union with Christ, by our perpetual feeding on him, and conversation, not only in his courts, but in his very heart, and most secret affections, and incomparable purities.

Oh here, if ever, God of love,
Let strife and hatred cease!
And every heart harmonious move,
And every thought be peace.

Not here, where met to think of him
Whose latest thoughts were ours,
Shall mortal passions come to dim
The prayer devotion pours.

No, gracious Master, not in vain
Thy life of love hath been;
The peace thou gav'st may yet remain,
Though thou no more art seen.

'Thy kingdom come:' we watch, we wait
To hear Thy cheering call;
When heaven shall ope its glorious gate,
And God be all in all.

PRAYER.

LORD, how often Thou callest us to repent! Thou art never tired of inviting us. Thou givest us every opportunity to turn to Thee and live. Thou shuttest us not out from Thy favour because of our great unworthiness and our frequent misdeeds. Thou takest no pleasure in the death of a sinner, nor is it Thy delight to punish. But Thou hast sent Thy Son Jesus to bid all the weary and the heavy laden ones to come to the gospel feast.—Father, we have tasted of this world's sweets, and we have found them bitterness. Now Thou hast roused within us a longing for righteousness, and a thirst for salvation. Satisfy, we entreat Thee, the craving of our souls. Let us drink of the living fountain, that we may thirst no more. Let us eat the bread of holiness, that we may not sin again. And Thine be the praise for ever, through our ever blessed Redeemer, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

MEDITATION AT THE LORD'S SUPPER.

I CORINTHIANS XI. 24.—*This do in remembrance of me.*

AGAIN do I partake of this blessed feast of my Lord, which unites us with him, and brings him to us in his trials, his sufferings and his dying love. How beautiful is the thought, that he wished that men for whom he died, should, by this simple act, cherish his memory, not only as their benefactor, but as one who shared with them the feelings of friendship, as one who desired their love and sympathy ! It may be that when our Saviour first ordained this mode of remembering him, he thought only of his Apostles who had been the chosen companions of his ministry ; but afterwards, when he was glorified, and had received into his heart's love not only the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," but *all* the wandering ones, *all* the children of his Father,—then he desired that they too should have awakened towards him the tender feelings of social love, and therefore made an especial communication of his wishes to the last, but not least of the Apostles, who must have been peculiarly dear to him, as the sinner who, through him, had repented.

How inspiring the thought, that I am now uniting with myriads of my fellow Christians in an act of love to that Saviour, through whom we have the greatest blessings we enjoy,—by whom we have access to the throne of grace,—who has revealed to us the Father of our spirits, and kindled in our souls that immortal flame which is to burn with a purer lustre in the presence of God, through the countless ages of eternity ! I eat of this bread, and drink of this wine, in remembrance of Jesus, of his body which was broken for us, of his blood which was shed for us. And what recollections arise to my mind of all he did and taught and suffered for us ! Each event of his life awakens within me new love and gratitude,—new conviction that he was indeed the beloved Son of God,—that it was he who was to call men from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, to give them the assurance of pardon and eternal life ; and I thank my God that He sent us such heavenly messages by so divine a messenger. But these memorials before me lead me peculiarly to dwell on this crowning act of love and

obedience, and on the scenes of tender friendship and of deep anguish which preceded it. Here I feel his presence near me ; and with his image, every blessing of his faith and hope rises brightly to view. Here He demands my deepest sympathy, my warmest love, my devoted obedience. Here would I resolve henceforth better to show my remembrance of him, by listening to his words, and obeying his commands ;—here would I lay aside all earnest desires, but that of sharing with him the presence of his Father and our Father. Oh may this blessed hour shed its influence over my future life, and may I go on my way rejoicing, with Jesus ever near me.

ACCORDING to thy gracious word,
In meek humility,
This will I do, my dying Lord,
I will remember thee.

Thy body, broken for my sake,
My bread from heaven shall be ;
Thy testamental cup I take,
And thus remember thee.

Gethsemane can I forget ?
Or there thy conflict see,
Thine agony and bloody sweat,
And not remember thee ?

When to the cross I turn mine eyes,
And rest on Calvary,
O Lamb of God, our sacrifice !—
I must remember thee.

Remember thee, and all thy pains,
And all thy love to me ;
Yea, while a breath, a pulse remains,
Will I remember thee.

And when these failing lips grow dumb,
And mind and memory flee,
When thou shalt in thy kingdom come,
Jesus, remember me !

PRAYER.

LORD ! Thou never forgettest us. Thou art mindful of Thy promises, while we think not of Thee. Thou preventest us by Thy grace, when we are nigh unto sin and destruction. We bless Thee that Thou hast thus far kept

us near Thee. Oh what a sweet thought it is to us, that so many are united with us around the table of Thy Son ! We thank Thee for the outward bond ; but far more for the One Spirit into which Thou baptizest us. Oh that we may remember Thee in our daily life ! that Thy Son may be with us in our daily pilgrimage ! that Thy Spirit may be our guard in the daily trials of faith and duty ! Oh never suffer the spirit of sinful forgetfulness to usurp the throne of Thy loved sovereignty ; but by Thy warnings, by Thy chastisements, by Thy helps, and by all Thy mercies, keep us in the knowledge of Thee, and in the remembrance of Thy Son. Amen.

MEDITATION AFTER THE LORD'S SUPPER.

I CORINTHIANS XI. 26.—*For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

WE have now made an open acknowledgment of our belief in Christ. We have recognised his claims on our love and obedience. Is faith dead ? Do we mean nothing by our professions ? Has not each one here been communing with his own heart, and been silently resolving that the time past of his life shall have sufficed to have worked iniquity ? We trust in the promises of mercy and forgiveness through Christ. Is this trust barren and unprofitable ? We believe that he whose death we are now commemorating, rose again ;—is that nothing to us ? Are we not sure that as he lives we shall live also ; and that, whether that future life is to be one of joy, or clouded by sorrow, depends on the way in which we have our conversation in the world ? We *may* indeed have been eating to our own hurt. If, with all these solemn considerations before us, we are unaffected, cold, or indifferent as to our salvation, careless of God, and of our own souls,—we may be sure that our condition is a melancholy one, and these neglected means of grace will rise as witnesses to condemn us. But let us examine ourselves. Surely our hearts must be now quickened by a love of Christ. Could we have walked with him, witnessed his deeds of

mercy, beheld his entire self-devotion, without being affected ! Could we have sat round the paschal table, received from him the bread and wine which he had blessed, heard his warnings, partaken of his consolations, foreseen his danger, witnessed his agony, beheld his patience under cruel mockings and scourgings, looked on him as he hung on the cross, and yet not have been moved with virtuous emotions ?

He now "is gone above the skies,
Where our weak senses reach him not,—
And earthly objects court our eyes,
To thrust our Saviour from our thought."

But, by this rite, we hold him dear in remembrance ; our memory is refreshed, our feelings are quickened. What a holy peace can he bestow on the contrite heart ! How calm the rest he offers to the humble and repentant ! How fearful, indeed, the doom of the daringly impenitent ! But how easy the yoke ! how light the burden, which those have to bear who follow him ! And then that peace and calm hope will be ours ; if we have loved him on earth, in heaven shall we behold him, when faith shall be lost in sight.

FROM the table now retiring,
Which for us the Lord hath spread,
May our souls, refreshment finding,
Grow in all things like their Head.

His example by beholding,
May our lives his image bear ;
Him our Lord and Master calling,
His commands may we revere.

Love to God and man displaying,
Walking steadfast in thy way,—
Joy attend us in believing !
Peace from God through endless day !

PRAYER.

FATHER ! We bless Thee for the privilege we have had in meeting around Thy Son's table. We thank Thee for all our opportunities of recalling the scenes of our Saviour's life and death, and of quickening our pure affections and heavenly hopes. They are indeed means of grace to us ! Lord, may we not be as those who do not thus taste of Thy

love. But let us shew them, we entreat Thee, by our greater earnestness and humility, that it has been good for us to be at Thy Son's table. May the death of Christ be so shewn forth in our life, that many may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus, and may thus be led to glorify Thee, our Father in Heaven. Thus work in us, we entreat Thee, that we may be blessings to those to whom Christ hath united us as brethren : and finally may we be joined as a holy brotherhood around Thy throne. Hear us, through Thy love in Jesus, Thy Son. Amen.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

LUKE II. 13, 14.—*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*

HOW beautiful is this emblem of the interest of heaven in the affairs of earth ; what an expression of that love which binds the moral universe together, as attraction the material !

If "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," at the creation, how much more should praise be given, that now the moral wreck and chaos were about to be restored to order, and men to become new creatures ! Or, if "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth," how much lovelier the jubilee when the Saviour was born, to call sinners to repentance, and reconcile the world to God ! How rapturous must have been the thanksgivings to Him who is the original and uncreated Source of all good, mercy and truth ; and who so loved the world, that He sent His Son to save it !

The angels sang praises to God for the Messenger He was now sending to bless the world. Worship is one of the highest acts of man or angel ; and an intimation, as it were, is given here, that, under the new dispensation, idolatry was to come to an end, and glory and honour supreme to be given to Him to whom alone they are due. Nor in vain. Earth is slowly preparing to echo back, one day, from all her green shores, and with the deep tone of her millions, the heavenly pæan,—Glory to God in the highest !

“And on earth peace.” Jesus was to be the Prince of Peace. It was one of his loftiest titles. Peace on earth, which has, heretofore, been such a Golgotha, might seem Utopian indeed, unless we consider the power of him who came to reign in human hearts and lives, and to bring every thought into captivity to himself. Filled with peace himself, he came to breathe it through all souls, quelling ambition, and anger, and revenge. He produces peace in the inner man, by harmonizing all the passions and appetites under the sway of conscience and reason, the voices of God ; peace in the world by the love of man to man, and of universal equity ; peace and reconciliation towards God, by the revelation of His mercy to the penitent offender, and of His wise purposes in our trials and sorrows.

“Good will towards men.” From God to man, and from man to man. More than peace, there was to be benevolence, positive kindness, sympathy, and relief. Man was to mete out to others that love which God meted out to him. The Saviour went about doing good, and he calls all his followers to engage in the offices of philanthropy. His religion has been eminently a religion of benevolence, even in its past imperfect manifestations. It has founded hospitals and schools, and missions and ministries to the poor and lost. It has crossed the bounds of country and colour, and scattered the best gift of time and eternity over dark and oppressed lands. But the angelic triad,—Piety, Peace, and Benevolence,—has but just begun to take effect. What happiness and glory, then, may we not expect from its future and hastening consummation !

O LOVELY voices of the sky,
 That hymned the Saviour's birth !
 Are ye not singing still on high,
 Ye that sang “Peace on earth ?”
 To us yet speak the strains
 Wherewith, in days gone by,
 Ye blessed the Syrian swains,
 O voices of the sky !

O clear and shining light, whose beams
 That hour heaven's glory shed
 Around the palms, and o'er the streams,
 And on the shepherds' head !

Be near through life and death,
 As in that holiest night
 Of hope, and joy, and faith,
 O clear and shining light !

O star which led to him, whose love
 Brought hope and mercy free !
 Where art thou ? Mid the host above
 May we still gaze on thee ?
 In heaven thou art not set ;
 Thy rays earth might not dim ;
 Send them to guide us yet,
 O star which led to him !

PRAYER.

EVER blessed Father ! In the darkness of our ignorance and sin, Thou hast sent the star of hope to lead us to our Saviour. Now we take courage, and join with all the voices of earth and heaven in praising Thee. Oh may we be transformed into the image of Thy Son. Give unto us the spirit of affection and devotedness. May we love Thee, our God, with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. May we regard all men as Thy children and our brethren, and love our neighbour as ourselves. May we be ever ready to rejoice with them that rejoice, and to weep with them that weep. May we be willing to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. While we endeavour to maintain religion's hallowed reign within our *own* hearts, may we strive to extend its power over the hearts and lives of the ignorant, the erring, and the sinful around us. O Father, crown with Thy blessing the labours of Thy servants, in all lands, in the removal of idolatry, war, slavery, intemperance, in chastity, and every other deadly sin ; and in the universal establishment and diffusion of light and holiness, justice, love, and peace. Unite families and nations together in the ties of brotherhood. May parents and children, brothers and sisters, dwell together in the exercise of strong and holy affections, rejoicing in each other's welfare, and sharing each other's sorrow. May unity and concord be the joy of every home and of every land. These blessings we implore as the followers of the Prince of Peace. Amen.

GOOD FRIDAY.

JOHN XIX. 30.—*It is finished.*

THE great work of man's redemption was accomplished ; the Saviour of men had finished the work which was given him to do !

Holy men of old had desired to see this day, but were not able. Moses and the prophets had told of it, and had blended with their prophetic announcements of the Messiah's power and glory, words, to many hearts, perhaps even to their own, dark and mysterious, which declared his humiliation and death. Jesus had fulfilled, "in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself:"—he knew that "the Christ must suffer, to enter into his glory."

The beloved Son of God had delivered the whole message of his Father to mankind ; and as he had been sent into the world, even so had he also sent into the world them whom the Father had given him. He who was "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," had led them to the Father ; he had filled their once-beclouded souls with the clear and certain conviction, that he came forth from God, and had given them all the words of eternal life to carry to mankind. The message of love and mercy was completed.

All his labours were accomplished. He had worked the works of Him who sent him while it was day ; he had done not his own will, but the will of his Father ; he had shrunk from no difficulty, avoided no peril ; he had not called legions of angels to his aid, though he knew that they would instantly have attended his summons ; but he had relied on the strength afforded by the consciousness of his Father's presence, and had lived after the power of an eternal life. The night had now come when all must be finished ; and he slept in death to awake in glory.

His sufferings were over ! He had chosen a life of privation and trial ; "houseless, sole, forlorn," he had not even where to lay his head ; the desert and the mountain had been his places of rest ; he had proved all that humanity most shrinks from ; his bodily sufferings, in themselves most agonizing, had been increased tenfold by the mental distress

occasioned by the desertion of his followers, the wilful rejection of the chosen people, the aggravating insults of his persecutors, and the knowledge of the calamities which their sins would bring on his beloved nation. He had prayed that the cup might pass from him :—it had not been removed, but he was strengthened to drink it. Can we stand by his cross, and look on him who was pierced,—can we behold sufferings, the mere contemplation of which drew from his holy brow large drops of mortal sweat like as of blood,—without admiring thankfulness that they were borne by a Son of Man with the meek prayer, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do !”—that by him suffering had been hallowed ; and that he has taught us that pain and sorrow are marks of the Father’s love, since they were appointed for the best-beloved ? Can we withhold from him our warmest love and gratitude, in that he willingly endured suffering, shame, and death, that by his stripes we might be healed ; in that he, “the holy one and the just,” laid down his life for the guilty and wandering, that he might bring them back to the ways of righteousness, and raise many sons to glory ?

His Father did *not* forsake him in those hours of mortal anguish ; as He had borne witness to his filial obedience in life, so did He in death. The deep gloom of a supernatural darkness shrouded the struggles of expiring nature ;—the shivering of rocks, the quaking of the earth, and the rending of the veil of the Holy of Holies, announced the awful moment when all was finished. But Jesus conquered death ; soon was he to be “declared the Son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead,” and exalted to the right hand of his Father’s throne to dwell for evermore.

BOUND upon the accursed tree,
Faint and bleeding, who is he ?
By the cheek so pale and worn,
By the crown of twisted thorn,
By the side so deeply pierced,
By the baffled, burning thirst,
By the drooping, death-dewed brow,
Son of man ! ’tis thou ! ’tis thou !

Bound upon the accursed tree,
Dread and awful, who is he ?
By the sun at noon-day pale,
Shivering rocks, and rending veil,

By earth that trembles at his doom,
By the saints who burst their tomb,
Low before thee, Lord, we bow ;
Son of God ! 'tis thou ! 'tis thou !

Bound upon the accursed tree,
Sad and dying, who is he ?
By the last and bitter cry,
The life breathed out in agony ;
By the lifeless body laid
In the chamber of the dead ;
Crucified ! we know thee now ;
Son of man ! 'tis thou ! 'tis thou !

Bound upon the accursed tree,
Dread and awful, who is he ?
By the prayer for them that slew,
"Lord, they know not what they do ;"
By the sealed and guarded cave ;
By the spoiled and empty grave ;
By that clear, immortal brow,
Son of God ! 'tis thou ! 'tis thou !

PRAYER.

BLESSED be Thy name, O Thou God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hast blessed us in all spiritual blessings in him. When stricken by the upbraiding of our consciences, and afraid of Thy presence, we feel the inestimable privilege of possessing a Mediator, who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities ; and we cling, with heartfelt gratitude, to Thy offers of pardon, which he hath sealed to us on the cross. Herein indeed is love, not that we loved Thee, but that Thou didst love us, and didst send Thy Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Oh may we be the friends of him who shewed such love in dying for us, by laying down our lives daily for the welfare of our brethren. May we die to every sin, and every vain desire : and henceforth devote ourselves wholly to Thy service and glory. And as Christ was raised from the dead by Thy mighty power, so may Thy Spirit raise us to newness of life, that we may henceforwards run the heavenly race with full purpose of soul. Guide us, we entreat Thee ; guard and protect us ; strengthen and support us ; enlighten and teach us ; pardon and correct us ; and lead us, daily, hourly, nearer unto the eternal kingdom of Thy Son. Amen.

EASTER SUNDAY.

ROM. VI. 4.—*That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

WHEN the first Christians assembled together they welcomed each other with this salutation,—“The Lord is risen, he is risen indeed !” He has become the first fruits of them that sleep ; he, first of all the sons of Adam, has conquered death, and inherited the promised blessing of eternal life. Can it be any matter of astonishment that those who were the witnesses of this mighty event, who knew that it set the seal of certainty on their own glorious destiny, should make it the continual and earnest theme of their preaching and writing ? Is it not more a subject for wonder that so momentous an occurrence, that a day which is the birthday of the Christian’s hope, should be passed over as it so often is, with but faint emotions of gratitude, with but feeble accents of praise ?

But here the Apostle awakens in us, if possible, still higher thoughts ;—he kindles in our souls the imaginings of the glory of Him who hath been, is, and is to come, of Himself, alone ;—of Him who filleth immensity with His presence, yet hath deigned to breathe into man the breath of life ; and then the Apostle tells us that this glory was exerted in raising to immortal life him who was the bright effulgence of eternal blessedness,—him who was called, by the Father of all, His well-beloved Son. These few words alone fill the soul with thoughts which strive to expand beyond the confines of this earthly tenement.

Yet even this is not all ; the Apostle does not stop here. He has so often assured us, and proved by the clearest reasoning, that the resurrection of Christ, our elder Brother, is a pledge and promise of our own ; that the mention of the one recalls, unbidden, the blessed hope of the other ;—here he adds another consideration. Our death unto sin and life unto holiness here below, should be in strict conformity with that death and resurrection of our Saviour which is the pledge of our own. We are spiritually baptized unto his death, we must even be thus buried with him, “that like as he was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father,

even so we also should walk in newness of life." And if our walking in newness of life can, in any manner, be compared to the resurrection of our Saviour, what an idea does it give us of the greatness, the surpassing importance of the change! His body had lost all consciousness; in the grave there is no remembrance. We are dead in trespasses and sins; we live not, for life is to be with God, and we have alienated ourselves from Him by wicked works. To these we must die, before we can live. But the early morning ray shone upon *him* from his Father's glory, and he rose to inherit it:—the emanations from that glory, reflected from our Saviour, fall on *our* souls to awaken us to walk in that newness of life which is a foretaste of eternity.

Shall such a summons be sent to us in vain? Shall such light find no entrance into our souls? Shall the stone be rolled away, and we remain in the tomb?

CHRIST, the Lord, is risen to-day,
Sons of men and angels say!
Raise your songs and triumphs high:
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply!

Love's redeeming work is done;
Fought the fight, the battle won:
Lo! our sun's eclipse is o'er!
Lo! he sets in blood no more!

Vain the stone, the watch, the seal;
Christ hath burst the gates of hell:
Death in vain forbids his rise;
Christ hath opened Paradise.

Lives again our glorious king:
Where, O death, is now thy sting?
Made like him, like him we rise;
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies!

Glorious bond of earth and heaven!
Praise to thee by both be given!
Thee we greet triumphant now:
Hail! the resurrection, thou!

HYMN OF PRAISE.

PRAISE YE THE LORD! PRAISE, O YE SERVANTS OF THE LORD,
PRAISE THE NAME OF THE LORD.

WHILST we live will we praise thee, O Lord: we will sing praises unto our God while we have any being.— When

we awake in the morning refreshed with sleep ; when we behold the goodly light of the sun, and go forth to perform the duties, and to enjoy the comforts of the day : our voice of thanksgiving shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord.— When Thou makest darkness and it is night : when we lie down on our bed in peace ; then will we call to mind the blessings of the day, and praise Thee our God, who hast provided sleep for man.— When all nature smiles around us ; when the earth is covered with verdure, and the trees with blossoms ; when the birds warble their notes in Thy praise, and innumerable creatures exult in Thy goodness ; we also will join the chorus of nature, and testify that Thou art great and wise, that Thou art kind and faithful.— And in the barren months of winter, when the fields and the woods rejoice no longer, when the tuneful birds are silent, and many creatures are buried in forgetfulness ; then our souls shall not forget Thee, nor shall our lips be silent in Thy praise ; for Thou crownest every season of the year with Thy goodness.— When Thou fillest our cups with the blessings of life, and the voice of health and gladness is heard in our dwellings ; when our path is pleasant, our prospects cheering, and our spirits lively ; then they shall be employed in showing forth Thy praises, O our God ! for we dwell in the light of Thy countenance.— And when months of vanity and wearisome nights are appointed to us ; when darkness encompasses the path in which we go, and dejection hangs upon our minds ; when we can neither enjoy the blessings of life, nor indulge those lively affections towards Thee our Maker which we wish to indulge ; even then will we praise Thee by submission and resignation to Thy will.— Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine ; though the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields yield no meat ; though the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls ; yet will we rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of our salvation.— Amidst all the changes of this mortal life, and amidst all the various dispensations of Thy providence ; in all things will we give thanks and praise Thy name.— Whilst we live will we praise the Lord ; and when we draw near to the gates of death ; when these hands, which have been lifted up to Thee, shall be motionless, and these tongues which have declared

Thy praises shall be silent ; still will we praise Thee, O our Heavenly Father ! in our thoughts ; and this shall be the grateful song of our hearts : "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."— But the grave shall not put an end to our songs of thanksgiving ; we will sing praises unto our God while we have any being ; and blessed be Thy name, O Thou fountain of life, our being will never cease. When our voice is entirely lost in death, and our mortal powers are no longer active ; then with more noble powers, and in heavenly strains, will we praise Thee, our God, and this shall be our grateful song : "Thou didst lead us forth by the right way to Thy heavenly kingdom."— Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might, be ascribed unto Thee our God for ever and ever. Amen and Amen.

ASCENSION DAY.

LUKE XXIV. 51—*And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.*

THEIR friend and Master had lived among them blessing them : and now he was taken from them, he departed blessing them. How holy, how soothing to their sorrowing spirits, was this last intercourse which the first disciples had with their Saviour on earth ! How unspeakably great was the blessing which then descended upon them ! Their souls must have been raised, in exalted contemplation, to the eternal world, which was now receiving one who had dwelt among them as a man of sorrows ; his dying words would give them the blissful assurance that where he was then going, his followers would be, for that he was preceding them to prepare a place for them ; and his last earthly words were a blessing. For a time the blank must have been great to them when they saw him no more ; yet was his very removal in wisdom and love. Their heavenly Father had received him to Himself, that by lifting *him* up He might draw their hearts to Him ;—He withdrew from them the light for a little while, that they might, after a season, enjoy it in brightness inexpressible. And how did they receive this last blessing of their Lord ? They continued with one

accord in prayer to God, until He had revealed His will to them ;—thus they went forth, armed with a spirit of love and zeal, to work the work of their great Master ; and they were supported by the power of his resurrection and ascension to discharge the most difficult duties, without shrinking from danger or difficulty.

Sometimes we too, his humble followers, who love a Lord we have not seen, are favoured with seasons of blessed intercourse with him and with our Heavenly Father. We appear to be in their immediate presence ; and, like St. Paul, hear and see things of which no human tongue can tell. It seems good for us to be there, and fain would we build tabernacles on the Holy Mount, for a bright cloud overshadows us, and the fashion of our souls has been so changed by prayer, that we have not feared to enter into it. But soon, while our holy delight is the greatest, when our Saviour seems coming to establish his kingdom in our souls, even then he is parted from us, and we are obliged to return to the things of earth again. Yet though we appear to have lost him entirely from our sight, he departed blessing, and to bless us ; and if we go on our way rejoicing, heavenly visitants will give us the assurance in our hearts, that in like manner as he departed, he will come again.

As the Saviour was parted from his followers and friends, and was received by his Father into His more immediate presence, so doth our God often now remove from among us those whom we love,—those who have been our guides and supporters in this earthly pilgrimage ; but He parts them from us while blessing us. They have been our comforters, they have led us in the road heavenward ; and, though now we see them no more, they continue to bless us, for their holy influence rests with us, and guides us in our earthly pilgrimage. God, too, is blessing us, perhaps we know not how ; but we know that what now seemeth dark to us, will be bright in that world where sorrow and sighing will be done away. Let us then, when, like the early followers of Christ, a friend and master is taken from us, be continually in the Temple of God's presence, praising and blessing Him ; and, from that holy communion with the Father of Spirits, we shall find strength to go on our way even rejoicing.

SEE our risen Lord ascending
To behold his Father's face;
All his earthly sorrows ending,
Full of peace and love and grace;
Hallelujah!
Ever blessed be the Lord!

Ye, his followers, upward gazing
Till his brightness fills your sight,
Upward still your spirits raising,
Dwell with him in heavenly light;
Hallelujah!
Joy, ye followers of the Lord!

Soon ye shall be with him ever;
Here his spirit is your guide;
Nought your faith from him shall sever;
Nought the love of God shall hide.
Hallelujah!
Blest the presence of the Lord.

Christians! still with patience striving
To obey the Lord ye love,
Soon your glorious morn arriving,
Ye shall dwell with him above.
Hallelujah!
Christians, haste to meet your Lord!

PRAYER.

OUR Father, Thou hast taken Thy Son Jesus unto Thyself; and Thou hast bid us trust that there are many mansions prepared for all who love his appearing. Oh, may the hope of heaven encourage us to every duty, and strengthen us to meet every trial. May the light from that better country cheer all the dark scenes of time. May we see Thy hand in every event; set Thee, the Lord, always before us; and be in Thy fear all our days. When we are allured by temptation, may we remember that Thou, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and who art our judge, seest us. In the hours of solitude, may we consider that we are not alone; that Thou, our Father and our God, art with us. Through every moment of this day, may Thy precepts guide us, Thy fear controul us, Thy love fill us with joy, and Thy providence be our refuge and our trust. Through every day may we be with Thee; and when flesh and heart shall fail us, be Thou, O God, the strength of our hearts; and be our

portion for ever in that world, where Thy presence will create fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore, to all who shall obtain Thy mercy unto eternal life, Thy gift in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

THE SAVIOUR'S PROMISE.

MATTHEW XXVIII. 20.—*Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*

HOW supporting and encouraging a promise to that little band of chosen followers, who had assembled, their number diminished by one sad defection, on the distant mountain which their Master had appointed them, to hear his parting injunctions ! These were not now his *dying* words,—he had passed from death unto life, and would for ever live in the glory of his Father.

And is not this promise to *us* also,—to us who are some of those “other sheep” who were not of his earthly fold ;—to us who have believed on the Saviour, through the word of his Apostles, and for whom he prayed that we might be one in him and in the Father ? A deep gulf of time is between us and the sacred moment, when, on the hallowed Mount, our beloved Master gave that promise to his disciples, and, with his now beatified body, sanctified the spot. Yet, through the abundant goodness of our Heavenly Father, who, in ways so marvelous, has preserved for us the record of that holy revelation, and made it now accessible to every heart,—we, of this remote clime, and in this distant period, hear the blessed words as if they were sounded in our ears, and see with the spiritual eye the benignant form of the Son of God as he uttered them,—that form so full of grace and truth, so meek and lowly, yet so great and glorious.

Yes, beloved Saviour, often have I felt thy promise brought home to my heart, when, having entered into my closet and shut the door, I have prayed to my Father who is in secret, and felt that thou wast leading me to Him. But have I, when again in the world,—have I, as I ought, made Thee my guide to keep me from the evil that is in it ? How often have I neglected the proffered aid, and instead of “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith,” have I followed

the dictates of my own headstrong will ! *Then*, my Saviour was not with me, for I had rejected him !

How near is my Saviour to me when I read the records of his life ; dwelling on each event with humble love, listening to his words of heavenly wisdom, imagination transports me to the spot, and I almost seem to listen to him on the Mount, by the Lake, in the Garden,—he appears to be nearer to me even than he was to his disciples, for they knew far less than we can now do of the deep purposes of his soul, his inward struggles, and his secret anguish. How privileged then are we,—am I ! But have I availed myself of this privilege as I ought ? Have I listened to his voice of tender correction, “ye know not what spirit ye are of,” when ruffled by the little trials of daily intercourse ? Have I striven to imitate his meek endeavour, yet firm and unbending constancy, when opposed in efforts of usefulness, or treated with forgetfulness or fickleness by those whom I have made many sacrifices to serve ? Have I sunk under pain, sorrow, or anxiety, and forgotten the anguish he voluntarily endured, that “through his stripes we might be healed ?” Oh may I have a more abiding memory of that blessed promise of my Saviour to be with us even to the end of the world !

Yet chiefly do I feel this promise true,—most intimately do I enjoy near communion with my beloved Lord, when I unite with my fellow disciples in celebrating that holy rite, by which, through the lapse of ages, all who love him have obeyed his parting injunction, “this do in remembrance of me.” O glorious hour, when we shall break the spiritual bread and drink the “new wine” with him in his Father’s kingdom ! Gathered round his table with me at this feast of love, are the dear but absent ones, distant in body, present in spirit,—and nearer to me still the beloved departed, who have laid aside their mantle of clay, and whose spirits appear to be with me still in my pilgrimage,—and many spirits of the “just made perfect,” whom we now seem to see and know better, *because* they are gone to the Father. This earthly love, mingling with that I bear to my Saviour, makes both more precious to me, and I look forward with more ardent hope to seeing him, with these loved ones, face to face, in those heavenly mansions in which, if his spiritual presence has been with us during our mortal career, we shall enjoy near intercourse with him for ever.

AND is he with thee ? question well thy heart,
 If in his promise thou hast claimed thy part ;—
 Ample thine heritage as *theirs* may be,
 Who held the legacy in trust for thee ;
 If in thy *life* he lives his history o'er,
 He blesses thee, as them he blest before.

Watch ! on thy spirit shall arise the star,
 Bright as it shone on days and climes afar ;—
 Listen ! while angel-voices, clear and sweet,
 “Glory to God, goodwill to men,” repeat ;
 Up, then, obedient to the guiding ray,
 Thy soul’s best offerings at his feet to lay.

Or, if on life’s chafed ocean, waste and dark,
 Conflicting passions toss thy weary bark,—
 Then let the holy presence, brightly still,
 Serenely walk the wild waves of thy will ;
 Secure thy course on this rough world shall be,
 As theirs who rode with him the midnight sea.

Sits he not with thee, as with them of yore,
 Breaking the bread he broke for them before ?—
 Not now those twelve alone, who called him Lord,—
 Witnessing spirits gather at his board ;
 Viewless they press, the awful feast to share ;—
 The dead, the absent, all are present there.

But, say, hast thou denied him ? It may be
 In deeds or thoughts, not words ?—Then, turned on thee,
 See the deep pity of that mournful glance,
 The majesty throned on the brow’s expanse ;—
 And the reproof which those mute lips express,
 Shall steep thee in remorseful bitterness.

Or doth some guilty shame, some mighty woe,
 O’ershadow all above, and all below ;
 Till thou hast lost the will, perhaps the power,
 To seek his presence in that fearful hour ?—
 Dark as that hour when night on noontide spread,
 And the earth shuddered with convulsive dread,—

Hope on, hope on ! there still is light above ;
 Be meek in penitence, but strong in love ;
 Seek him, though long, perchance, in doubt and fear
 You wander, murmuring, “He is not here !”—
 “He is not here,” a soothing voice replies ;
 “To yon calm heavens see him calmly rise !”

Follow with straining eyes his radiant way,
Thy sins, thy sorrows, shall he bear away ;
Yet, is he with thee ? Rise, prepare thy breast
As fits a mansion for such honoured guest ;
When purged from earthly care and earthly ill,—
When *that* is heaven—*there* he is with thee still !

PRAYER.

OUR Father ! Blessed art Thou for the promise that Thou wilt come, with Thy Son, and take up Thine abode in our hearts. For what purpose hast Thou given us life, and a knowledge of our dependance on Thee, but that we may live in Thy fear, and seek Thy blessing always ? Give us grace, that we may feel in our inmost hearts that Thou art indeed our Father : and may this knowledge of our dependance upon Thee be to us ever a fortress of protection, into which we may escape in the hour of trial and despondency, and find peace and safety. Oh give us faith to believe ; and pardon our unbelief. Our minds assure us that everything around us is full of blessing. Open our eyes, even as Thou didst the eyes of the doubting prophet of old ; that we too may see Thy power and Thy goodness overshadowing and protecting us. Thy armies encamp about the habitations of the just. Thou sufferest no evil to come nigh their dwelling. Thy word is pledged to make all things work together for good unto them that love and fear Thee. Thy gifts are all divine. Treasures of love lie hidden in all our hearts. Thy wisdom and Thy goodness are manifest in the sacred relations of life. Oh make these joint relationships, means of grace and strength to each of us. May we all grow more and more in Thy likeness ; that our home may be as a fruitful garden, in which all virtues and all graces shall abound ; that meekness and gentleness, temperance and self-denial, kindness and love, may bring forth all their fruits amongst us, and ripen us all for heaven. Transform us daily more and more into the image of Christ ; and may he be with us to guide us to the better land. And through him we ascribe unto Thee, unceasing praises. Amen.

IN CASE OF SEVERE ILLNESS.

JOB XVII. 1.—*The graves are ready for me.*

HELP me, O my Father, to say from the heart ‘Thy will be done.’ Whether this sickness be unto death or not, still, O God, let it be for Thy glory, and for my eternal good. May this disease of my body, make my soul to be in health and prosper. Though my outward man decay and perish, may my inward man be renewed day by day; and never die, but live for ever. Hast Thou not reduced my strength to weakness, that I might lean upon Thee, and be strong in the Lord? Hast Thou not taken away the desire of mine eyes, that I might desire none but God? Hast Thou not taken away my appetites, that I might the more hunger and thirst after righteousness?

Yea, Lord, blind and ignorant as I am, I can see some of the wisdom and goodness of Thy present dealings with me. It is the hand of my Father that guides me in this valley of tears. It is good for me that I am thus afflicted. How often and how easily do my thoughts now rise to Thee! Thy character, Thy providence, Thy word, Thy truth and grace coming by Jesus Christ—what interesting and delightful themes of meditation are they now to me!

Every increase of patience and fortitude, of light and of hope; every mitigation of pain; every sign of returning health; all that nourishes, refreshes, and sustains me; all remind me of Thy careful presence, and awaken my gratitude.

Oh, let not the impressions made by sickness, be obliterated by returning health. Let not the thoughts and resolutions of adversity be forgotten, if the days of prosperity should again be mine. This affliction has already given me a disrelish for the vain pleasures of this world. Shouldst Thou restore me, let them not attract and charm me again. I now delight to read Thy word, and to commune with Thee by prayer and meditation; and shouldst Thou once more give me my former strength and vigour, give me a heart still to rejoice in Thy service. A sense of Thy presence now sustains and cheers my spirit; let not Thy healing mercies tempt me to forget Thee.

If many wearisome days and nights are appointed unto me, teach me to suffer Thy will without complaining. Oh, that I might be patient, submissive, resigned; casting my care upon Thee; to Thee committing my cause; ascribing righteousness to Thee my Maker, even in my greatest trials; trusting in Thy defence; hoping in Thy mercy. And oh, may I spend all the time of my sickness, which I can command, in reviewing my life; in examining myself by the light and precepts of Thy holy word; in exercising hearty sorrow and true repentance for my sins; in cherishing faith in the Saviour, and pious gratitude for Thy goodness and grace.

And if this sickness is to be my last, oh may Thy Spirit so renew, influence, and sanctify me; may my repentance be so sincere and thorough; my faith so living and strong; my love to mankind, to my blessed Saviour, and to Thee, so pure and affectionate, that Thy mercy in Christ may save my soul, and that death may be gain to me.

WHEN sorrow sinks my spirit down,
And grief o'erwhelms my troubled mind,
Faith cries, 'Look up to God alone,
A refuge thou in Him shalt find.'
My soul obeys the sacred word,
And casts her care upon the Lord.

What though affliction's shades surround
My path, yet God is wise and just;
And oft my fainting soul hath found
The promise true in which I trust:
Shall I then doubt His sacred word?
No! let me humbly trust the Lord.

'Tis in the hour of deep distress,
That we religion's comfort prove;
The chastening hand we feel and bless
Of God, that scourges us in love.
Though nature sinks beneath the rod,
Yet faith reposes still in God.

It is the Lord that strikes the blow;
Let every murmuring thought be still:
Oft has He made my cup o'erflow,
And shall I dare dispute His will?
For ever be the thought abhorred!
My soul, still wait thou on the Lord!

Wait, till He bid thy sorrows cease,
'Till He thy every care remove ;
And though thy troubles fast increase,
Thou need'st not doubt thy Father's love :
Though He delay, yet trust His word ;
For true and faithful is the Lord.

Yes, Israel's God was never known
To leave His children in distress ;
Mercy and truth surround His throne,
His judgments all are righteousness :
Still shall my soul this truth accord ;
I will for ever trust the Lord.

PRAYER.

O GOD, by Thy inscrutable providence Thou hast turned my health into sickness ; my days of joy and comfort, into days of pain and languishing. Thou hast reduced my strength to weakness, and my flesh is wasting away by disease. Thou didst create,—Thine is the power to restore and heal me. If it please Thee, direct me to the use of such means as shall be effectual to my recovery. Yet not my will, but Thine, be done. O Father, assist me to bear patiently and profitably all the chastisements of Thy hand. Save me from murmuring and repining, from despondency and gloom. Comfort my troubled heart by a living faith in Thee and in Thy Son. Refresh my fainting spirit with heavenly hopes and prospects. Sanctify my trials and afflictions to me. So long as I am continued in this feeble and dying frame, dispose me to lean on Thee for support. Though my outward man perish, may my inward man be renewed day by day ; though sickness press upon my body, may my soul be in health and prosper. Prepare me for all the sufferings I am yet to endure. Help me to exercise that repentance which is unto life ; that faith which shall give me the victory over death ; and oh ! inspire me with a hope that shall never make me ashamed ! While I live, be Thou my strength and confidence ; and when I die, receive my departing spirit ; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

AFTER RECOVERY FROM SICKNESS.

PSALM CXVI. 13.—*I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.*

PERHAPS, before you were sick, you were very inattentive to the duties, and even to the subject of religion. You neglected your Bible. How many days it has lain by you untouched ! Anything served as an excuse from seeking to know the words of eternal life ; business, company ;—nay, it may be, you were afraid to be seen with the Scriptures in your hands, though not ashamed to be seen with a newspaper, a novel, and even with works of an immoral tendency. Never treat that precious and sacred volume so again. You need its hopes and promises to support you. You need its counsels and instructions, from day to day. You need its renovating truths to sanctify you, and make you wise unto salvation. During your illness, you have seen how suited the gospel is to all your spiritual wants. Let it ever be your light and guide. Perhaps you seldom prayed. It may be, that you had never lifted up your voice and soul to God in fervent supplication, till he had laid his correcting hand upon you. And was it the pains and apprehensions of a sick bed that first persuaded you to seek God ? Was it HERE that you learnt to pray ? Oh, never forget those prayers. They are registered in Heaven. Let them be faithfully engraven on the tablets of your memory. Never let another day find you prayerless and undevout.

Before you were visited with sickness, you were not constant in your attendance on public worship ; or if you were, you did not listen and profit, as you might have done. Very different in future should be your conduct. If you have in time past, never again spend the Lord's day in drowsiness, recreation, and sin. Improve now all the means and opportunities of grace afforded you, and no longer be unconcerned about your immortal soul.

You have peculiar joys and pleasures, of which those who have never been sick can form no adequate perception. The pleasures of retrospection ; of comparing the gloomy

past with the bright and cheerful present; the remembrance of pains abated; of weakness and languor, now changed to strength and vigour; of disease healed; of severe remedies successfully applied; of danger escaped: of fears proved groundless; of trembling hopes realized; of numberless mercies mingled with all your trials; of prayers heard and answered. Yours is the joy of a captive ransomed; of a prisoner released from his chains, darkness, and dungeon. Delightful beyond description are the sensations which one feels, when his limbs regain their activity and strength; when the frame is clad anew with flesh, and the skin has the smoothness and freshness of a little child's. And then the pleasure which every new effort and motion gives; the new beauty with which every object striking the eye seems to be clothed. The prospect too, that you are able to walk forth again; to feel that you are unconfined; to drink in the pure morning air; to have the sun again salute you with his golden beams, and the healthful breeze playing delightfully around you; to cast your eye once more over the fields, the orchards, the woodlands, the hills, and to the distant mountains that skirt your horizon; and then to receive the sympathies and warm congratulations of friends; to return expressions of thankfulness to those who had watched around your sick bed;—oh, there are a thousand sweet remembrances, a thousand sources of pleasure, known only to those who have been sick.

Let it be your prayer and endeavour that your former sickness and your present health may be sanctified to you; that they may be additional means to purity of heart, and righteousness of life.

FATHER! This gentle chastisement
Falls kindly on my burdened soul;
I see its merciful intent,
To warn me back to Thy controul;
And pray that while I kiss the rod,
I may find perfect peace with God.

The errors of my heart I know;
I feel my deep infirmities;
For often virtuous feelings glow,
And holy purposes arise;
But like the morning clouds decay,
As empty, though as fair, as they.

Forgive the weakness I deplore ;
And let Thy grace abound in me,
That I may trust my heart no more,
But wholly cast myself on Thee !
Oh ! let my Father's strength be mine,
And my devoted life be Thine !

PRAYER.

MERCIFUL Father ! With joy do I call upon my soul, and all that is within me, to bless Thy name. With joy do I again draw water from the wells of salvation. Thou hast been very merciful in Thy chastisements ; and now Thou hast given me the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Father ! may this joy of renewed health in body, be a pledge of far greater joy, even of a soul renewed and sanctified. I bless Thee for the time of silent thought. Now Thou callest me to a day of active service. Let not the holy resolutions, and the near glimpses of heaven, which I had in my sickness, be lost upon me, now that I yet more need Thy help. It was easy to me to think of Thee, when there was no other source of comfort. Help me, Father, to remember Thee, now in the days of trial, when the way of duty is often clouded, and the temptations of selfish expediency and pleasure are urgent. Save me, Father, from the great sin of neglecting Thy warnings, and deliberately choosing the way of destruction, after Thou hast shewn me the path of life. Be Thou my support ; and I fear not. Never cast me off, I entreat Thee ; but bring me safely to Thy eternal kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

IN CASE OF DEATH.

I THESS. IV. 13.—I would not have you be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others who have no hope.

IF our brother sleep in Jesus, he shall do well. He resteth from the cares and the toils, the temptations and the snares, the disappointments and the anxieties, the afflictions and bereavements, which, in this scene of trial and imperfection,

attend even those who are in circumstances of outward prosperity. Henceforth, no pain nor distress awaiteth *him* ; no racking disease shall wear *him* ; no failing powers shall dispirit *him*. No more shall *he* weep for the distresses of others which *he* cannot remove ; no more shall *he* grieve because *his* powers will not accomplish that which was in *his* heart for the welfare of *his* brethren. But we trust that he is gone to a better country ; where there shall be light without a cloud, and where sorrow and sighing shall for ever flee away. *He* is gone to *his* home : the days of *his* pilgrimage and of *his* mourning have been ended : the gates of death have been opened to *him* : and while mortals cry, 'A man is dead,' angels shout, 'A child is born.'

And would we, for our own sakes, have detained our *brother* in the land of thorns and clouds ? When God was willing to take the spirit unto Himself, could we have wished that it should tarry longer with us, in pain and weakness ? Let not such be the selfishness of our hearts. Let us 'rejoice for our *brother* deceased ; our loss is *his* infinite gain.' It was far better that *he* should depart and be with Christ : and, although to stay here may have seemed more needful for us, it was only in appearance. It may be best for us also that *he* was taken. The light of *his* earthly course, may now aid in shewing us the path to glory. The lessons of *his* death may work life in us. This new earnest of the heavenly inheritance, may quicken us in our search after it. This new tie to earth that is broken, may become a new tie to bind us to the heavenly kingdom.

There is a time for solemn mourning ; and this is such a time. Even if the principles of the gospel are in some good measure the guide of our conduct and affections, yet the feelings of nature are the same, and it is right that we should give them place in our hearts. Let us not endeavour to smother them, or to check their expression. Let not the chilling customs of the world, or false views of delicacy, prevent us from dwelling much and seriously on the life and death of the departed, both in the communion of our own hearts, and in the family circle. Let us allow *him* to live still amongst us in the spirit, though the bodily presence is denied us.

If the sorrow of our hearts, and the communing of our souls, lead us, with increased earnestness, to seek after the peace of Christ, it will indeed be well for us. Beauty will spring out of ashes, and lie out of the dust. In the midst of our affliction, we shall rejoice and leap for joy. And we shall find that we are not left comfortless, for the Holy Spirit of love, and patience, and trust, and faith, will come and take up its abode in our hearts.

Thou art gone to the grave—but we will not deplore thee ;
Though sorrow and darkness encompass the tomb ;
The Saviour hath passed through its portals before thee,
And the lamp of his love is thy guide through the gloom.

Thou art gone to the grave—we no longer behold thee,
Nor tread the rough path of the world by thy side ;
But the wide arms of mercy are spread to enfold thee ;
And sinners may hope, since the sinless hath died.

Thou art gone to the grave—but 'twere wrong to deplore thee,
When God was thy Father, thy Guardian, thy Guide ;
He gave thee, and took thee, and soon will restore thee,
Where death hath no sting, since the Saviour hath died.

PRAYER.

HOLY Father! Without Thy direction, nothing happeneth to us in life or in death. Out of the depths of affliction and sorrow, unto Thee do we lift up our souls ; for our help and our hope are in Thee alone. We bless Thee for the life Thou hast thus far given us : and now that Thou hast taken our loved one to Thyself, we pray that our hearts may go to Thee also. Give us grace so to follow the holy examples of those who have departed this life in Thy faith and fear, that at length we may, with them, be partakers of Thy heavenly kingdom. May we strive to redeem the time that has been lost ; and so number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto true wisdom. May we spend the remainder of our days on earth, in the faithful discharge of our duty ; and live in such a manner as we shall wish to have done, when we come to die. May we glorify Thee on earth, and finish the work which Thou hast given us to do. And when we shall leave this world, may we rest in peace ; and, being found acceptable in Thy sight, may we be received into Thy heavenly kingdom, with all dear unto us ; through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

FOR THE LAST DAY IN THE YEAR.

JAMES IV. 14.—*What is your life?*

THE winds of the dying year are now sighing around us with their departing breath ;—they warn us, in accents of fearful solemnity, to look back, before the light of another year shall open upon us, and see what improvement has been made of this.

Let us come to the enquiry honestly ; but how few can do so without painful solicitude, for how little reason have we to think that *improvement* has been our one great object ! Time rolls on, and the world changes as it goes. But how many, as regards *character*, appear to be standing precisely where they stood a year ago, or even many years ago ! Just as good as they were, and no better ; no more devout, charitable, patient, or forgiving ; no less worldly, selfish, irritable, and slothful. Change has passed over them ; trial has summoned them to thought ; Providence has warned them by a various discipline of gladness and grief ; but there they stand, unaffected, and unimproved. They have basked in the light ; they have been refreshed with the dews of benignant and perpetual grace ; but there is visible no spiritual growth, there have ripened no fruits of holiness.

Are we among those who have felt the worth of our souls, and have designed to walk in that path of duty which shall lead to life ? We have made a certain progress in the great work of preparation,—the acquiring a Christian character. What have we done respecting it during the past year ? What additional advances have we made ? Are we better acquainted with religion ? Is our life more under the controul of its laws ? Are our dispositions more subjected to its spirit ? Do we feel and exhibit a more disinterested regard to the welfare of others ; and have we become more habitually alive to the presence and authority of God ?

These questions every religious man ought to be able to answer in the affirmative. If he cannot, what has he been doing ? If no better man, no better Christian, than five years or one year ago, to what purpose, and in what way, has that time been spent ?

Happy, thrice happy, is he who can look calmly on this solemn hour, and, while Time pauses on his way, can survey his character and history without a blush or a sigh ! Happy that religious man who knows that he is more holy since the year began, and can hear, without trembling, the winds of the messenger as they sweep by him, bearing up to God the unchanging register of the finished season ! He may hope to meet serenely the last hour of life. He may have peace, when his eyes shall close on the last sun of his earthly existence. But if, careless and unprofitable Christian ! your conscience reproach you for the misspent time and wasted opportunities of this one year ; if you look, with shame and agitation, at the empty record which it now gives in to judgment ; oh, how will you bear the arrival of that day, when all the books shall be opened, and time shall be no more ? Awake ! Arouse yourself ! Let it be enough that one barren year has past ! Rouse yourself to diligence and duty ! It may be that the fruitless tree will be spared one year longer. Awake ! Be sober, and watch unto prayer. Redeem the time that has been lost. Forget the things that are behind, and reach forth unto those that are before.

THE year hath passed away
 Swift as the gliding stream ;
 And all its scenes appear
 Like relics of a dream !
 Spent are its griefs, its joys are flown,
 And memory holds their trace alone.

Frail fleeting life ! how soon
 May thy probation close,
 And they who prize thee most
 In the still grave repose !
 Thy joys are grief,—they cannot last,
 And change comes o'er thy seasons fast.

Then pause, my soul, and trace
 Time's progress and thine own ;
 Shall earth thy cares engage
 When better things are known ?
 Oh fix thy love on heavenly bliss ;
 All other good shall fail but this.

Yes! let thy zeal be strong
 Life's purpose to fulfil,
 And work, with all thy power,
 Thy righteous Father's will:
 So shall thy deeds be truly blest,
 And death conduct to endless rest.

PRAYER.

HITHERTO Thou, O Father, hast blessed us. Through how many trials, through what varied difficulties, hast Thou sustained us! What cause have we for gratitude, for mercies continued and renewed to us, and for the many unexpected blessings of the year past! Father, Thou hast overwhelmed us with Thy favours. Thou hast given us as much joy as we would open our hearts to feel. Thou hast blessed us with the means of holiness and the hope of glory.—With humbling, contrite sorrow, we would call to mind the sins and errors of our hearts. Of Thine infinite mercy, pardon the neglects and transgressions of the past year, and of our past lives; and give us grace to watch and strive against them for the time to come. We desire to begin the year with Thee. Oh, may it be spent faithfully in Thy fear. We would afresh commit ourselves to Thy care, and devote ourselves to Thy service. And may we be wiser and better, more useful to others, more faithful to Thee, more influenced by Thy Spirit, more devoted to Thy service, and more meet for that world where days and years shall be unknown, and time shall be no more. We ask all through Jesus Christ, our ever blessed Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

“To sum up all in a word, wait patiently, trust humbly, depend wholly upon, seek solely to a God of light and love, of mercy and goodness, of glory and majesty, ever dwelling in the inmost depth and spirit of your soul. There you have all the secret, hidden, invisible Upholder of all the creation, whose blessed operation will always be found by a faithful, humble, loving, calm, patient introversion of your heart to Him, who has His hidden heaven within you, and which will open itself to you, as soon as your heart is left wholly to His eternal, ever-speaking word, and ever-sanctifying spirit within you.”

LAW.

Poetical Meditations.

THE LORD'S PRESENCE.

BLEST is Thy presence, Lord ! while, lowly bending,
 Abased by sin, we humbly seek Thy face ;
 On children of the dust Thy love descending
 Shall bid us rise, and fill us with Thy grace.

And as the glorious sun, from dark clouds breaking
 Dispels the sorrowing dewdrops of the night ;
 So in our hearts, Thy presence, Lord, awaking,
 Chases our fears, and turns our gloom to light.

Hallowed Thy presence, Lord ! before Thee kneeling,
 Pure thoughts and holy transports fill the soul ;
 Thy peace within our troubled spirits stealing,
 Far off life's storms and ocean billows roll.

Heavenly Thy presence, Lord ! while here before Thee
 In faith we see the mansions of the just,
 Enraptured join the angelic hosts to adore Thee,
 And make Thee all our joy, our hope, our trust.

And let Thy blessed presence, Lord ! attend us,
 While struggling in the world with sin and care !
 Oh may Thy everlasting shield defend us !
 May all our hearts be Thine, our thoughts be prayer !

MOONLIGHT.

SOFTLY I slumbered on my peaceful couch,
 And sweetest visions floated round my head :—
 I waked ;—and saw the Moon's full radiance
 Poured down on me in silent majesty
 From that bright sphere where is her blest abode.
 Yet I had tranquil slept, and seen her not !
 And is there not a glowing halo shed
 Ever around us ?—Rays of love divine ?
 We feel its blessed fruits, yet slumber on !
 Oh may we wake to taste its blessedness !

A DECEMBER SUNRISE.

THE curtains of the Morn were slow upraised,
And their broad folds glowed with a crimson light.
Forth from the radiant dwelling of the Sun
Day's glories brake, and in them I beheld
A distant glimpse of Heaven. But soon the Earth
Spread mists and boding clouds before my sight,
And all around was the dark Vale of Tears!—
When will the Day-spring rise of Endless Morn?

A CLOUDY SUNRISE.

THE morning dawned, but no bright glorious sun
Kindled my waking soul to hope and joy.
Dark clouds obscured the pure ethereal vault,
And deadening mist the earth. I sighed,
The gloom sank on my soul. Again I looked;
A roseate hue touched the o'erhanging clouds,
They glowed with light approaching. Now behold,
Midst floods of glory, still more glorious,
The sun ariseth! The weak eye in vain
Attempts to gaze, in awe and wonder lost;
Yet on some isles, floating in radiance on,
Outskirts of heaven, it turns its longing look,
And thoughts unearthly fill the ravished soul.

My spirit! hast thou never faithless sighed,
When clouds o'erhung thy morn? Has ne'er a doubt
Darkened thy faith? Behold, thy Father's love
Shines brightly over all, illumines all
With rays of faith and hope;—then in thy soul
Receive its beams of light ineffable!

THE FINAL REST.

MY spirit sighs to leave this vale of night,
Where a dark mist shades off heaven's glorious blaze
From our too feeble vision, and to gaze
Upon the boundless source of endless light.—
Freed from this mortal clay, when shall my sight
Behold unmingled goodness? Mercy's rays
No longer dimly;—the all-perfect ways
Of Him who cannot err, supremely right?
But yet I sojourn here! His will is best!
Be still, my soul! check thy too fond desire;
Ere half thy race is run, seek not for rest;
Thy burden still to bear, faint not, nor tire.
Joy that thou may'st now turn thy longing eyes
To the eternal mansions of the skies.



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